

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON

June 21, 1960

160
JUN

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Dear Allen:

Many thanks for letting me read the file
on the Crabb case, which I return herewith.

I found it most interesting reading, with
some interesting parallels for debate to the one
we have recently witnessed here.

Sincerely,

Livingston T. Merchant

Livingston T. Merchant

Enclosure:

Stated.

The Honorable

Allen W. Dulles, Director,

Central Intelligence Agency.

Ex fil
OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Mr. Dulles:

You were inquiring whether or not the British actually published the text of its note to the Soviet Union in which it apologized for the Crabb incident. We have not been able to locate a specific text put out by the British Foreign Office, but it does appear from the following newspaper material that they did, in fact, release the text of their note.

The first texts of the two notes published in the press were in the London Times of 12 May. The London Times published the text of both the U.S.S.R. and British notes but attributed them to Reuters pickup of the Tass announcement. However, on 13 May, the New York Times, in publishing the text of the British note, prefaced it with the following statement. "The Foreign Office today published the text of the following note sent to the U.S.S.R. apologizing for the Crabb frogman incident." In addition, the New York Herald Tribune of 13 May in an AP dispatch stated, "A British Foreign Office spokesman today said that the U.S.S.R. had violated diplomatic usage by publishing the text of the British note to the U.S.S.R. in the Crabb case. Admitting officially that the apology had been made, he said, nevertheless, it is customary for a country to publish only the texts of its own notes."

[redacted]

FMC
9 June 1960

25X1

122⁴ Comma

Members who wish to have the Daily Report of the Debates forwarded to them should give notice at the Vote Office. The Bound Volumes will also be sent to Members who similarly express their desire to have them.

No proofs of the Daily Reports can be supplied, nor can corrections be made in the Weekly Edition. Corrections which Members suggest for the Bound Volume should be clearly marked in the Daily Report, but not telephoned, and the copy containing the corrections must be received at the Editor's Room, House of Commons

not later than
Monday, 14th May, 1956

**STRICT ADHERENCE TO THIS ARRANGEMENT
GREATLY FACILITATES THE
PROMPT PUBLICATION
OF THE VOLUMES**

Members may obtain excerpts of their Speeches from the Official Report (within one month from the date of Publication), on application to the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office, c/o the Editor of the Official Report, House of Commons, from whom the terms and conditions of reprinting may be ascertained. Application forms are available at the Vote Office.

PRICES AND SUBSCRIPTION RATES

DAILY PARTS

Single copies:

Commons, 9d. (by post 11d.); Lords, 9d. (by post 10½d.).

Annual subscriptions:

Commons, £5 10s. 0d.; Lords, £4; Both Houses, £8 17s. 6d.

Short period subscriptions to cover 40 consecutive daily issues:

Commons or Lords, £1 10s. 0d.

WEEKLY HANSARD

Single copies:

Commons, 2s. (by post 2s. 6d.); Lords, 1s. 6d. (by post 1s. 8d.).

Annual subscriptions:

Commons, £4; including Index, £4 17s. 6d.

Lords, £2 15s. 0d.; including Index, £3 7s. 6d.

Index—Single copies:

Commons, 6d. (by post 7½d.); Lords, 4d. (by post 5½d.).

Annual subscriptions: Commons, £1; Lords, 15s.

BOUND VOLUMES of Debates are issued periodically during the session. There is no fixed subscription rate, but prices will be quoted and standing orders entered on application.

THE INDEX to each Bound Volume of House of Commons Debates, which may be used in conjunction with the corresponding Daily Parts and Weekly Hansard, is published separately at 2s. (by post 2s. 2d.) and can be supplied to standing order.

All subscription rates are inclusive of postage.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE

To be purchased from

York House, Kingsway, LONDON, W.C.2 423 Oxford Street, LONDON, W.1
P.O. Box 569, LONDON, S.E.1

13a Castle Street, EDINBURGH, 2 109 St. Mary Street, CARDIFF
39 King Street, MANCHESTER, 2 Tower Lane, BRISTOL, 1
2 Edmund Street, BIRMINGHAM, 3 80 Chichester Street, BELFAST
or from any Bookseller

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

Although the Committee met London, I consider that the speed limit to the rest of the country is not appropriate, considering the local interest.

As regards reconstruction, the special speed limit to the Committee's considerations other than those which have to be considered, like the Committee in considering this

recommendation. I accept that a maximum speed limit is not required by the American limits, but I will give the possibility of adopting speed limits. I do present to adopt a single traffic lane

I strongly endorse recommendation 21. Recommendation 21's consideration of pedestrian crossings will bear this in mind in its programme.

I subscribe to the recommendation 21 that through traffic should greatly be reduced. I feel, however, that the Town and Country power to direct local traffic permission for trunk roads, but I respect county roads. I propose to right now. Friend the Local Government

I also accept the further studies shown to fine discipline, the control of speed limit crossings and measures.

I have noted the Committee's production of

Viscount Hinckley's right hon. Friend that there would be conciliation of the industry will raise the speed limit of vehicles from 20 to

Mr. Watkinson's question.

One-Way
Lane Grove

So, Mr. Tommey Transport and Civil Service expects to be able to go to a unilateral Lane Grove, Shepshed

Mr. Molson: Police tells me that

1225 Commander Crabb

9 MAY 1956

(Presumed Death)

1226

Although the Committee was only concerned with London, I consider the principle of a 40 m.p.h. speed limit to be equally applicable to the rest of the country. I am, therefore, consulting the local authority associations and other interested bodies.

As regards recommendation 14, which refers to the special speed limits for vehicles, I note that the Committee recognises there are many considerations other than those of traffic flow which have to be borne in mind. I will, however, take the Committee's views into account in considering this difficult problem.

Recommendations 16-22 (General matters)
I accept that a maximum speed limit on all roads is not required. I do not propose to copy the American system of *prima facie* speed limits, but I will give further consideration to the possibility of adopting the idea of "zonal" speed limits. I do not intend, at least for the present, to adopt different speed limits for different traffic lanes on the same road.

I strongly endorse the view expressed in recommendation 20 regarding the physical separation of pedestrians from the traffic, and will bear this in mind in regard to the current road programme.

I subscribe to the view expressed in recommendation 21 that roads specially built for through traffic should not be allowed subsequently to become built-up. Development of land is, however, subject to the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Acts. I have power to direct local planning authorities to refuse permission for development adjacent to trunk roads, but I can only give advice in respect of county roads if called upon to do so. I propose to draw the attention of my right hon. Friend the Minister of Housing and Local Government to this recommendation.

I also accept the recommendations, that further studies should be made with regard to lane discipline, the use of traffic lights for the control of speed, the approaches to pedestrian crossings and the accuracy of speedometers.

I have noted the Committee's views in regard to the production of high-powered cars.

Viscount Hinchingbrooke: Now that my right hon. Friend has assured himself that there would be no material adverse criticism of the increase in speed as such, will he raise the speed limit of commercial vehicles from 20 to 30 m.p.h.?

Mr. Watkinson: That is a different question.

One-Way Working, Lime Grove—Pennard Road

56. Mr. Tomney asked the Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation when he expects to be able to make a decision in regard to a unilateral parking system in Lime Grove, Shepherds Bush, W.12.

Mr. Molson: The Commissioner of Police tells me that he proposes to try an

experiment with one way working in Lime Grove and Pennard Road in the next few weeks. My right hon. Friend will ask the London and Home Counties Traffic Advisory Committee to consider, in the light of that experiment, whether any restrictions on waiting are desirable.

COMMANDER CRABB (PRESUMED DEATH)

The Prime Minister (Sir Anthony Eden): With your permission, Mr. Speaker, and that of the House, I will make a statement on the subject raised by Question No. 9.

It would not be in the public interest to disclose the circumstances in which Commander Crabb is presumed to have met his death.

While it is the practice for Ministers to accept responsibility I think it necessary, in the special circumstances of this case, to make it clear that what was done was done without the authority or the knowledge of Her Majesty's Ministers. Appropriate disciplinary steps are being taken.

Mr. Dugdale: Is the Prime Minister aware that that is one of the most extraordinary statements made by a Prime Minister in the House of Commons and that, whatever he may say to the contrary, it is a complete evasion of Ministerial responsibility? May I ask him one or two questions? Whether he will answer them or not appears doubtful. First, why was Commander Crabb diving in the close vicinity of the Soviet cruiser which was here on a friendly visit? Secondly, why, and under whose authority, was a police officer sent to the hotel at which Commander Crabb was staying, and why did he order the leaves to be torn from the register showing the names both of Commander Crabb and of the man with whom he stayed? Further, what was the name of that other man and why did the police officer threaten the hotel keeper with action under the Official Secrets Act if he did not allow that to be done?

The Prime Minister: I thought it right to make the statement which I have made to the House, and I have nothing to add to it.

Mr. Gaitskell: Is the Prime Minister aware that a great deal of information

1223. Oral Answers

shortly after the Transport (Disposal of Road Haulage Property) Bill becomes law.

Mr. Davies: Will the Minister ask the Road Haulage Disposal Board to include in its final audit a statement as to the number of vehicles out of service for maintenance or repair at the time the audit is made? The Minister, as the Parliamentary Secretary will know, has intimated that 7½ per cent. is the figure. We understand that it is far greater than that.

Mr. Molson: I believe it is the intention of the Board to do that, but I will certainly ask it to do so.

Differential Speed Limit, London Traffic Area

55. **Mr. Partridge** asked the Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation whether he is now able to make a statement about the recently published Report of the London and Home Counties Traffic Advisory Committee on the 30 miles-per-hour speed limit in the London traffic area.

Mr. Watkinson: Yes, Sir. I have decided to accept the main recommendations of the Committee. I propose to introduce a new differential speed limit of 40 m.p.h. on suitable lengths of road in the London traffic area as soon as the views of the local authorities particularly concerned have been received and considered.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland also proposes to discuss with the local authority associations and other bodies in Scotland those matters of general application raised in the Report.

I am circulating a fuller statement in the OFFICIAL REPORT.

Mr. Partridge: May I ask my right hon. Friend how soon he expects to put this new differential speed limit into force? May I further ask whether this is to be regarded as an experiment before being applied generally throughout the country?

Mr. Watkinson: How soon will depend on how long it takes to get the views of the local authorities, and of course I am anxious to carry them with me. As to the general scheme, it will be

9 MAY 1956

Oral Answers

1224

started in London, where I am the traffic authority. I regard it largely as an experiment to see whether this differential speed limit on the edge of large towns will help the flow of traffic?

Mr. Isaacs: Does it mean that on roads where there is now a speed limit of 30 miles an hour traffic will be able to travel at 40 miles an hour, or does it mean that unrestricted roads will have a speed limit imposed on them of 40 miles an hour?

Mr. Watkinson: The limit can move either way. The experiment will be carried out, which will mean that some roads with a present limit of 30 miles an hour will have the limit increased to 40 miles an hour, and on some roads which are unrestricted the limit will be 40 miles an hour. But the principle is that round the periphery of big towns we shall try to get a better flow of traffic by having a two-stage limit.

Following is the statement:

Conclusions on the detailed recommendations of the Committee:

Recommendations 1-8 (Built-up area speed limit). I agree that the 30 m.p.h. speed limit in built-up areas is fundamentally sound and should be retained. On balance I consider it should remain in force for 24 hours a day. I also agree that in future on trunk and classified roads the limit should not automatically be extended by the provision of new street lighting, and a Clause to effect this is already in the Road Traffic Bill.

Provisions are also in the Bill which would permit the use of repeater signs where there are no street lamps, as recommended by the Committee. As regards improving the lighting of speed limit signs, the revised traffic sign Regulations, circulated in draft for comment last year, would go some way towards meeting this recommendation, but I propose to pursue the matter further with the responsible local authorities.

Recommendations 9-14 (Differential speed limit). I accept the arguments, supported by the majority of the Committee, for a new speed limit of 40 m.p.h. on suitable lengths of main road, which, I believe, will contribute both to road safety and to the better observance of speed limits generally. I am proceeding, therefore, to seek the views of the local authorities in whose areas lie the lengths proposed for 40 m.p.h. speed limits in Appendices 2 and 3.

I hope all local authorities in the London traffic area will collaborate with me in introducing at the earliest possible moment a well considered and consistent pattern of these speed limits. No legislation is required. I shall keep these lengths closely under review and, when sufficient experience has been gained, I propose to ask the views of the Departmental Road Safety Committee on the results.

1227. Command

has already been about this matter on reflection, in speculation which time in the absence from the Government: "It will in right hon. Friend that it really would general interest, if given?

The Prime Minister right hon. Gentleman the fittest consider I can also assure him issues which are the Prime Minister himself in this all reflection the information at it my duty, as I House the Answer I must tell the House the Answer I have

Mr. Gaitskell: I aware that that a satisfactory? Is he while all of us we public security, it inevitably arise that a statement on this much in the interest to hide a very grave occurred

The Prime Minister the country must draw from what I have said "They will,"]—of course what I have declined any right hon. Gentleman that I have weighed this; and they will Answer I have given, as right hon. Gentleman experience, know—these signs which only a take and I am convinced careful reflection, that taken was the right a

Mr. Gaitskell: Are it that in the absence of the Prime the light of what he the public drawing the officers were engaged, Majesty's Forces was business of espionage visit?

I am the traffic
gely as an ex-
this differential
of large towns
c?

n that on roads
ed limit of 30
e able to travel
es it mean that
e a speed limit
iles an hour?

limit can move
ment will be
ean that some
it of 30 miles
it increased to
on some roads
e limit will be
he principle is
of big towns
flow of traffic
it.

ent :
ed recommenda-

lt-up area speed
i.p.h. speed limit
tially sound and
nce I consider it
hours a day. I
ink and classified
automatically be
ew street lighting,
s already in the

bill which would
gns where there
mmended by the
ving the lighting
ised traffic sign
ft for comment
towards meeting
opose to pursue
esponsible local

fferential speed
ts, supported by
tee, for a new
itable lengths of
will contribute
etter observance
am proceeding
s of the local
the lengths pro-
ts in Appendices

in the London
ith me in intro-
moment a well
n of these speed
ed. I shall keep
view and; when
ained, I propose
artmental Road
ts.

Approved For Release 2003/02/27 : CIA-RDP80B01676R000900070003-5
1227 Commander Crabb 9 MAY 1956 (Presumed Death)

1228

has already been published in the Press
about this matter? Does he not think,
on reflection, in view of the amount of
speculation which undoubtedly will con-
tinue in the absence of any information
from the Government—[An HON. MEM-
BER: "It will increase.")—and, as my
right hon. Friend has said, will increase,
that it really would be wiser, and in the
general interest, if a full explanation were
given?

The Prime Minister: I can assure the
right hon. Gentleman that I have given
the fullest consideration to this matter.
I can also assure him that there are certain
issues which are the responsibility of the
Prime Minister himself. Having given
this all reflection and having given all
the information at our disposal, I thought
it my duty, as I have said, to give the
House the Answer that I have given; and
I must tell the House that I cannot vary
the Answer I have given.

Mr. Gaitskell: Is the Prime Minister
aware that that answer is totally unsat-
isfactory? Is he further aware that
while all of us would wish to protect
public security, the suspicion must
inevitably arise that his refusal to make
a statement on this subject is not so
much in the interest of public security as
to hide a very grave blunder which has
occurred.

The Prime Minister: The House and
the country must draw their conclusions
from what I have said—[HON. MEMBERS:
"They will.")—of course, and also from
what I have declined to say. Naturally,
any right hon. Gentleman will understand
that I have weighed all these considera-
tions; and they weighed heavily in the
Answer I have given. But I repeat—and
as right hon. Gentlemen, with their
experience, know—there are some decisions
which only a Prime Minister can
take and I am convinced, after the most
careful reflection, that the decision I have
taken was the right and the only one.

Mr. Gaitskell: Are we really to take
it that in the absence of any further state-
ment from the Prime Minister, and in
the light of what he has just said about
the public drawing their own conclusions,
officers were engaged, or an officer of Her
Majesty's Forces was engaged, on the
business of espionage during the Russian
visit?

32 K 33

The Prime Minister: The right hon.
Gentleman, if I may say so with respect,
is perfectly entitled to put any wording
he likes upon what I have said. My
words stand as they were, without any
gloss that anyone could put on them.

Mr. Shinwell: The right hon. Gentle-
man has just told the House that he
proposes to take disciplinary action.
Those were his words. Will he be good
enough to say against whom he is taking
disciplinary action, and for what reason
he is taking this disciplinary action?

The Prime Minister: No, Sir. What I
have said in my statement was that dis-
ciplinary steps are being taken. That is
so.

Mr. Shinwell: Would the right hon.
Gentleman be good enough to enlighten
hon. Members on this matter? Against
whom is he taking disciplinary steps?
Is it against an individual, or individuals,
who gave instructions to Commander
Crabb? Against whom is the action
being taken and for what reason is he
taking action? Is it because they defied
authority, or is it because they acted with-
out consulting Her Majesty's Ministers?
What is the reason for the action?

The Prime Minister: I have nothing to
add to the Answer I have given.

Mr. Dugdale: In view of the Govern-
ment's most unsatisfactory Answer, I beg
leave to move the Adjournment of the
House under Standing Order No. 9 to
call attention to a definite matter of
urgent public importance, namely, the
failure of Her Majesty's Government to
give a satisfactory explanation to the
country about the events connected with
the disappearance of Commander Crabb.

Mr. Speaker: The right hon. Member
asks leave to move the Adjournment of
the House under Standing Order No. 9
to call attention to a definite matter of
urgent public importance, namely, the
failure of Her Majesty's Government to
give a satisfactory explanation to the
country about the events connected with
the disappearance of Commander Crabb.

This application is covered by auth-
ority. When a Minister refuses to answer
a Question on the grounds of public in-
terest it has been ruled in the past—and
I adhere to it myself—that that is a
matter which cannot be raised under the

1229 Cypriots (Death Sentences)

9 MAY 1956

Cypriots (Death Sentences) 1230

[MR. SPEAKER.] Standing Order. Therefore, I must decline to admit the right hon. Member's application.

Mr. Wigg : With respect, Sir, the Question was tabled for answer by the First Lord of the Admiralty. It really was a matter for him because a naval establishment had been used. The Prime Minister's reply makes that quite clear. It would, therefore, appear to be an abuse of the rules of the House that the Minister, who, clearly, has a responsibility in this matter, passes it to the Prime Minister, not, Mr. Speaker, in the interests of the country, but of the political interests of the Government.

Mr. Speaker : Order. There is no point in that at all. The Prime Minister is quite entitled to answer the Question.

CYPRIOTS (DEATH SENTENCES)

Mr. Fenner Brockway : I am sorry to delay the House, Mr. Speaker, but I want to ask your permission to move the Adjournment of the House on another matter, of which I have given you notice. I ask permission, under Standing Order No. 9, to move the Adjournment of the House on a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the decision of the Governor of Cyprus to maintain the execution of two Cypriots, the effect of which may be disastrous to the furtherance of a peaceful settlement.

May I say, Sir, that I am aware of the rule of the House which says that we must not discuss the fate of men sentenced to death before either a reprieve is granted or the execution takes place. I wish to raise this matter not primarily because of the fate of the men, but because of the serious effects that it will have in Cyprus in relation to the furtherance of a settlement there.

Mr. Speaker : The hon. Member asks permission under Standing Order No. 9 to move the Adjournment of the House on a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the decision of the Governor of Cyprus to maintain the execution of two Cypriots, the effects of which may be disastrous to the furtherance of a peaceful settlement.

The hon. Member was good enough to say that he was aware of the rule of

the House which prevents the House from discussing on the Adjournment or otherwise a sentence of death before its execution. It is an old-established custom of the House.

A very clear and considered Ruling on this matter was given by my predecessor in the Chair on 10th March, 1947, when dealing with another colonial case. That clearly lays down the practice of the House, by which I am bound, that such a matter cannot be raised on the Adjournment of the House.

With regard to the other matters which the hon. Member attaches to this, the really definite matter is that of the capital sentences. The other matters are not definite or urgent. Therefore, I am bound by the rule of the House to decline to find that this comes within the Standing Order.

Mr. Shinwell : I was under the impression, Mr. Speaker, that the rule to which you have just referred, which is familiar to hon. Members, applied almost exclusively in the case where the Home Secretary is involved; that is to say, in a case where a civilian in this country has been sentenced to death and is at the point of execution. Obviously, the matter cannot be raised in such an instance.

Surely this is a quite different matter. This is a matter quite outside the Prerogative or jurisdiction of the Home Secretary. It is a matter concerning the action taken by a Governor, who, presumably is responsible either to the Colonial Secretary or to Her Majesty's Government as a whole. Surely in those circumstances the rule does not apply.

Mr. Speaker : If the right hon. Gentleman will consult the Ruling of my predecessor to which I have referred—that was a colonial case—he will find the argument which he has put before the House and before me dealt with and rejected. The real point is that it is a question of the Royal Prerogative. Insofar as the Secretary of State for the Colonies has any responsibility for advising Her Majesty as to any residuary Prerogative which she may have in the matter he is in exactly the same position as the Home Secretary would be had it been the case of a capital sentence of a subject in this country.

Mr. J. Griffiths : While being aware of and appreciating the Ruling which you

-BB 12-

USSR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
May 14, 1956

U.K. ANSWERS USSR NOTE ON FROGMAN CASE

Moscow, Soviet Home Service, May 11, 1956, 2028 GMT--L

(Text)

Exchange of notes between the USSR Embassy in London and the Foreign Office of Great Britain, note of the USSR Embassy in London to the Foreign Office of Great Britain:

On May 4 the USSR Embassy in London sent a note to the Foreign Office of Great Britain, the contents of which were as follows:

The USSR Embassy in Great Britain conveys its respects to the Foreign Office of Great Britain, and has the honor to notify it of the following:

During the stay in Portsmouth of a squadron of Soviet warships on Apr. 19 at 0730 hours, sailors of the Soviet ships discovered a diver swimming between the sides of the Soviet destroyers. The diver, wearing a black, light-weight diving suit with flippers on his feet, remained on the surface for a minute or two, and then dived again near the side of the destroyer Smotryashchy.

The officer commanding the squadron of Soviet ships, Rear Admiral Kotov, in a conversation with the Chief of Staff of Portsmouth Naval Base, Rear Admiral Burnett, drew his attention to this case of the appearance of a diver near the mooring of the Soviet ships directly alongside the destroyers.

Rear Admiral Burnett categorically denied the possibility of the appearance of a diver alongside the Soviet ships, and stated that during that time no diving work whatsoever was being carried out in the harbor.

Actually, as is evident from reports published in the British press on Apr. 30 of this year, the fact that secret diving experiments were carried out by the naval command in the area of the mooring of the Soviet ships in Portsmouth is confirmed. Moreover, the execution of these experiments resulted in the death of the British diver.

It is sufficient to recall that the DAILY SKETCH, in a note on the death of the diver Crabb, reported as follows: "He dived the last time in Stokes Bay, in the area of secret test trials not far from the mooring of the Russian cruiser Ordzhonikidze."

Attaching great significance to such an unusual fact as the carrying out of secret diving trials alongside Soviet warships visiting the British naval base of Portsmouth, the Embassy would be grateful to the Foreign Office of Great Britain for clarification of this question.

-BB 13- &
-BB 14-

USSR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
May 14, 1956

British Note

Note of the Foreign Office of Great Britain to the USSR Embassy in London: On May 9 the USSR Embassy in London received the following note from the Foreign Office of Great Britain:

The Foreign Office of Great Britain conveys its respects to the Embassy of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and has the honor to give the following answer to the Embassy's note dated May 4:

As has already been publicly stated, Lieutenant Commander (Kapitan Tretyevo Ranga) Crabb was carrying out diving tests, and is supposed that he perished during these tests. The diver detected from the Soviet warships, and, as stated in the Soviet note, swimming between the Soviet destroyers, was, in all probability, (Po vsei vidimosti) Lieutenant Commander Crabb.

His presence near the destroyers was without any permission whatsoever, and Her Majesty's Government expresses regret over this incident.

Kotov Interview in PRAVDA

Moscow, TASS, in English Morse to North America, May 13, 1956, 0200 GMT--E
(Text)

Moscow--PRAVDA publishes an interview with Rear Admiral V.F. Kotov concerning the incident with the British diver Crabb, which reads:

It has been learned from the exchange of notes between the Embassy of the USSR in London and the British Foreign Office, published yesterday, that Commander Crabb, the British diver, carried out secret diving tests on Apr. 19, in the area of the anchorage of the Soviet warships which had come to the United Kingdom on a friendship visit. The British press bluntly points out that Crabb perished while carrying out an underwater espionage operation against the Russian cruiser during the stay of the Soviet ships in Portsmouth.

In this connection a PRAVDA correspondent rang up Rear Admiral V.F. Kotov, the commander of the Soviet naval squadron that had visited the United Kingdom in April, and asked him to describe this incident. Rear Admiral V.F. Kotov communicated the following:

At 0730 GMT on Apr. 19 three sailors of the destroyer Sovershenny, which was anchored next to the cruiser Ordzhonikidze in Portsmouth Harbor, spotted on the surface of the water between the Soviet destroyers a diver clad in a black, light diving suit. On his head he wore a mask with a quadrangular cut for the eyes. On his feet were rubber flippers.

The

tory of the great Frogman Muddle now comes a surprise turn from Russia

BAND K TO EDEN'S RESCUE

They attack Gaitskell

Sunday Express Political Correspondent

THE fantastic Frogman Mystery took its strangest turn of all yesterday. The Russians came to Sir Anthony Eden's rescue in his acutely difficult position. They attacked Mr. Gaitskell for trying to make capital out of the mission of Lionel Crabb near the Russian ships on their visit to Portsmouth.

The Socialists were poised for their all-out attack on the Government tomorrow. They thought they had the Premier on a spot, particularly after the disclosure that the Cabinet had sent an apology to Russia, and kept the fact secret for several days.

Into this situation stepped Marshal Bulganin and Mr. Krushchev through the Russian Government newspaper Izvestia. Said this Kremlin mouthpiece:

"The leader of the Labour Party, Gaitskell, proposes to make a sharp criticism of the Government in the name of his party. The Labour leaders wish to make use of this incident to distract the attention of the public from their own actions during the stay of Mr. Bulganin and Mr. Krushchev—actions which were not well-wishing towards the Soviet Union."

True, Izvestia condemns the action of "those British circles mixed up in the Crabb affair as incompatible with international law and hospitality." But it does not condemn the Government with those quarters.

And *Pravda*, the Russian Communist Party newspaper, has another bitter article about that dinner at which the Socialists quarrelled with B and K. It condemns Mr. Gaitskell and other Socialist leaders as in "a position even worse than that of the Right-wing of the Conservatives."

This article is doubly significant because it is signed by "Observer," a signature which often covers authorship of the highest level.

REPLY from Mr. Gaitskell last night: "The Soviet Communist Party is evidently continuing its violent campaign against the British Labour Party. The Communists are furious that we attempted to raise the question of Social Democrats imprisoned in Communist-controlled countries.

"How little they understand us! We have no regrets, and make no apologies. We are satisfied that public opinion is overwhelmingly behind us.

"As for the 'frogman' affair, it would be the duty of any Opposition in Britain to probe such an extraordinary story of muddle and incompetence of a Government department."

• **ARTHUR BRITTENDEN adds some more pages to the Frogman Dossier**

Did the Russians KNOW Crabb was coming?

BELIEF is growing that when Lionel Crabb went into the waters of Portsmouth harbour, Russian frogmen were waiting for him.

Seven months ago Crabb accomplished a similar mission under the Russian cruiser Sverdlov in Portsmouth harbour. He talked about it to other frogmen. And they, regarding that mission as a never-to-be-repeated triumph, talked too—to a wider circle.

Did Russian agents hear about the Sverdlov affair? If so they would beyond doubt warn the Russian Navy to protect the B and K ship. And it is pretty certain that one of the first people to know that Crabb had dived—and failed—was Mr. Krushchev. He probably knew before Sir Anthony Eden.

A hidden meaning?

While our Secret Service men were still trying to keep the incident hushed up, Mr. Krushchev in a Birmingham speech on April 23 declared: "We don't ask you to sell us guns or warships. As a matter of fact, the armament on a modern warship is not so very much up to date.

"If you want one or two (Mr. Krushchev laughed), we could sell you some of our cruisers because they very soon get out of date today. What we did yesterday is out of date today. That is obvious to everyone."

Only now does the possibility of hidden meaning in those remarks become clear. Is it not likely that Krushchev was throwing out veiled hints that he knew all about the Commander Crabb incident?

One riddle solved: Where he got his gear

ONE of the great anxieties at the Admiralty (except among the few in the know) was that Crabb would be found wearing officially-issued gear. That, at once, would have implicated the Service as a whole.

But I can reveal that Crabb did NOT use Admiralty kit. He bought his frogman's suit, flippers, and mask from a private firm at Surbiton, Surrey, when he went on the Sverdlov mission. He paid between £20 and £30 for the gear.

When Crabb set off to Portsmouth with that gear nearly four weeks ago to inspect the B and K ship he had still not completed paying for it. He was planning to settle the bill out of the 60 guineas he was offered

for his latest job by his Secret Service bosses. **BUT THAT MONEY HAS STILL NOT BEEN PAID OUT.**

Crabb's solicitors have asked the Admiralty about it. They are still waiting for the money to be handed over.

The tardiness over payment of Crabb's fee prompts another question which, when answered, will reveal Crabb's true status:

What about the pension issue?

IS Mrs. Beatrice Crabb, the frogman's mother and next-of-kin (Crabb's marriage was dissolved), to get a pension? If she does, it can mean only one thing: that the Government accepts responsibility for Crabb's venture.

Does this factor lie behind the Admiralty's refusal to say that Crabb is dead?

Two weeks have passed since they stated he must be "presumed dead." But still no certificate of presumption of death has been issued.

I understand that, if this certificate is not issued in the next few days, Commander Crabb's solicitors are to make vigorous representations.

When an unmarried Serviceman is killed in action, a pension for the next-of-kin depends on need. Mrs. Crabb makes no hardship claim. But if Crabb was on official service employment, at least, the Admiralty must inquire whether she requires help.

That inquiry—or the lack of it—will show just how "official" Crabb's mission was.

16 May 1956

Approved For Release 2003/02/27 : CIA-RDP80B01676R000900070003-5
THE TIMES

POLITICAL NOTES

**VOTING IN DEBATE
ON CDR. CRABB**

**MR. MORRISON AND MR.
SHINWELL ABSTAIN**

FROM OUR POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

Two Opposition ex-Ministers who did not vote with their colleagues against the Government in the division at the end of Monday night's Commons debate on the Commander Crabb affair were Mr. Herbert Morrison, the former deputy leader of the party, and Mr. Shinwell. Both had taken part in the division two hours earlier at the end of the Cyprus debate and had registered their votes against the Government.

Mr. Clement Davies, leader of the Liberal Party, voted against the Government in the Cyprus division and for the Government in the division that followed the Prime Minister's refusal to say more about the circumstances of the presumed death of Commander Crabb.

THE THEATRE TAX

Sir Thomas O'Brien presided at the all-party meeting of M.P.s held just before the Budget to hear the theatre industry's plea for the abolition of entertainments duty on the living theatre. This plea has received a great deal of support among back bench M.P.s and there was disappointment when the Chancellor was unable to make in his Budget any concession of the kind that had been hoped for.

The new clause is supported by Mr. Grimond, the Liberal Chief Whip, and Mr. Robens, a member of the Labour

Big Ben

Big Ben will be stopped early in July so that the clock and bell hammers can be overhauled. The clock faces will also be reglazed and the work will take about three months. This was announced by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Works, in a written reply yesterday to a question by Mr. John Eden in the House of Commons.

Repair of war damage to the clock tower began a year ago, and the same scaffolding will be used for the work on Big Ben. The makers of the clock, Messrs. Dent, will overhaul the clock mechanism without charge under their maintenance contract.

The bell hammerwork will be removed for renovation and repair and the hands will be taken off. When all four faces have been reglazed, the Ministry will continue experiments with the lighting of the clock, including trials with fluorescent tubes.

While Big Ben is being overhauled, the B.B.C. will broadcast the chimes of St Paul's Cathedral.

BY-ELECTION WRIT

The Government Chief Whip yesterday

Approved For Release 2003/02/27 : CIA-RDP80B01676R000900070003-5

NO AUTHORITY FOR DIVE BY COMMANDER CRABB

SIR A. EDEN'S REPLY: FULL ACCOUNT "NOT IN PUBLIC INTEREST"

A fruitless Opposition attempt was made yesterday to get the Speaker's permission to move the adjournment of the House, after the Prime Minister had steadily refused to enlarge on his short statement about the death of Commander Lionel Crabb, the frogman who was reported missing after a dive in Stokes Bay, near Portsmouth Harbour, on April 19.

Although Labour members received with sounds of shocked surprise Sir Anthony Eden's decision, in the public interest, not to disclose the circumstances in which Commander Crabb was presumed to have met his death, the House heard in almost complete silence the news that what had been done was without the authority or knowledge of Ministers, and that appropriate disciplinary steps were being taken.

The Prime Minister's firm refusal to be drawn by taunts of evasion and the like was warmly applauded from the benches behind him, but the Opposition showed themselves increasingly restive at his resistance to their pressure for more information.

"COMPLETE EVASION"

The subject arose on Mr. J. Dugdale's question asking for the evidence on which the Admiralty officially presumed the death of Commander Crabb; what were the circumstances of his disappearance; and whether efforts were still being made to locate the body.

Sir Anthony Eden replied: "It would not be in the public interest for me to give details of the circumstances in which Commander Crabb is presumed to have met his death. While it is the practice of Ministers to accept responsibility, I think it is necessary, in the special circumstances of this case, to make it clear that nothing has been done without the knowledge or the knowledge of her Majesty's Ministers. Appropriate disciplinary steps are being taken."

Mr. Dugdale said this was one of the most extraordinary statements ever made by a Prime Minister. It was a complete evasion of ministerial responsibility. Mr. Dugdale then put the question again.

Why was Commander Crabb diving in the close vicinity of the Soviet cruiser here on a friendly visit? Under whose authority was a police officer sent to the hotel at which Commander Crabb was staying with another man, ordering the leaves of the register to be torn out and names to be torn out? What was the name of the other man? Why did the police officer threaten the hotel proprietor with the Official Secrets Act?

The Prime Minister replied: "I thought it right to make the statement which I have made, and I have nothing to add to it." (Ministerial cheers.)

MR. GAITSKELL'S PLEA

Mr. Gaitskell, Leader of the Opposition, said: "The Prime Minister will be aware that a great deal of information has already been published in the Press. Does he not think on reflection, in view of the amount of speculation which undoubtedly will continue in the absence of any information from the Government, that it really would be better and in the general interest, if a fuller explanation were given?" (Opposition cheers.)

Sir Anthony Eden replied that he had given the fullest consideration to this matter. "I can assure Mr. Gaitskell," he went on, "that there are certain issues which are the responsibility of the Prime Minister himself. After due consideration to all the information at our disposal I thought it my duty to give the answer I have, and I am afraid I must tell the House that I cannot vary from the answer."

Describing this answer as "totally unsatisfactory to the Opposition," Mr. Gaitskell asked: "Is the Prime Minister aware that while we would all wish to protect public security, suspicion must inevitably arise that his refusal to make a statement is not so much in the interests of public security as to hide a very grave blunder which has occurred?"

"ONLY DECISION"

The Prime Minister rejoined that the House and the country "must draw their conclusions from what I have said [Opposition cries of 'It will'], and also from what I declined to say." Mr. Gaitskell then went on, "will understand I have weighed up these considerations and they have weighed heavily in my answer. With his experience, he knows there are some of these decisions only a Prime Minister can take, and I am convinced after the most careful reflection the decision is the right and only one."

Mr. Gaitskell then asked: "If we take it, in the absence of any further statement from the Prime Minister, and in the light of what he has just said about the public drawing their own conclusions; that in fact officers or an officer of her Majesty's forces was engaged upon the business of espionage?"

Sir Anthony Eden.—Mr. Gaitskell is perfectly entitled to put any wording he likes on what I said. My words stand as they are without any gloss anyone can put on them."

Replying to Mr. Shinwell, who asked again whom the Prime Minister was taking disciplinary action, and for what

reason, Sir Anthony Eden said: "What I said was that disciplinary steps are being taken."

Mr. Shinwell asked if action was to be taken against some individual or individuals who gave instructions to Commander Crabb; and if it was because they defied authority, or because they acted without consulting Ministers. The Prime Minister repeated: "I have nothing to add to my answer."

Mr. Dugdale sought leave to move the adjournment of the House, in view of the Government's failure to give a satisfactory explanation of the events connected with the disappearance of Commander Crabb.

The Speaker, giving his ruling, said: "This application is going to be by authority. When a Minister applies to answer a question on the grounds of public interest it has been ruled in the past—and I adhere to it—that that is a matter which cannot be raised, and, therefore I must decline the application."

SHADOW CABINET'S DISCUSSION

FURTHER QUESTIONS BY LABOUR M.P.

FROM OUR POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT
The Prime Minister had full support from Government back benchers for his firm refusal to say anything in reply to questions yesterday about the circumstances of the disappearance of Commander Crabb, but Opposition members thought that his statement would merely add to the mystery and intensity of speculation.

Mr. John Dugdale's question, to which the Prime Minister had not been addressed to Mr. George Ward, Parliamentary and Financial Secretary to the Admiralty, who is the senior representative of that department in the Commons. The Prime Minister decided yesterday that it would be better for him to reply to the question himself. Earlier in the day he had as his guest at luncheon on 10 Downing Street, Lord Mountbatten, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff.

VIEWS ON DISCIPLINE

There was much anxiety among M.P.s of all parties about the "appropriate disciplinary steps" to be taken in connexion with the incident. Some members thought that since the Prime Minister had decided to keep silent it would not be appropriate to disclose the circumstances in which Commander Crabb is presumed to have met his death it would have been better for him to have left the matter there, without adding the reference to disciplinary measures.

Conservative members and Ministers alike were surprised at the vehemence with which the Leader of the Opposition joined in the questioning of the Prime Minister and at his reference to the possibility of "espionage during the Russian visit." The Opposition were intensely dissatisfied with the Prime Minister's reply, their view is that the incident was a disturbing diet of incompetence and muddle on the part of whatever authorities were concerned. The matter was discussed last night at a meeting of the Opposition Shadow Cabinet and the feeling there appears to have been that the incident must be probed fully.

It was agreed that the Opposition will seek to raise the incident in a Commons debate at the earliest opportunity next week. Monday will probably be a Supply day in the House when the Opposition choose their own subjects of debate—and this will enable them to interrogate the Government further on the mystery of Commander Crabb. The Opposition also wish to debate the situation in Cyprus, in the light of the confirmation by the Governor of the two death sentences, and both these subjects may be dealt with on Monday.

Mr. Arthur Lewis, Labour member for West Ham, North, has also tabled a question for next Wednesday. He will ask the Parliamentary and Financial Secretary to the Admiralty what position Commander Crabb held in his department; where the officer was stationed; and whether the Minister will make a statement on the circumstances in which Commander Crabb has been posted as missing.

ADMIRALTY SILENCE

It was impossible to discover last night, after the Prime Minister's statement, whether the Admiralty adhered to the announcement they made on April 29, that Commander Crabb "did not return from a test dive which took place in connexion with trials of certain underwater apparatus in Stokes Bay, in the Portsmouth area, about which as far as I know, he was asked if it was still the position, the Chief of Naval Information, Captain A. W. Clarke, said: "The Admiralty has no comment, no further information, and is not prepared to answer any questions at all."

Until last night Admiralty spokesmen repeated the statement of April 29 in answer to questions, adding that beyond it they had no comment.

A naval spokesman at Portsmouth said, on the question of disciplinary steps: "I have no knowledge of anything in this connexion in the Portsmouth Command." A similar statement was made at H.M.S. Vernon, the Navy's underwater establishment at Portsmouth.

MAY 13 1956

Approved For Release 2003/02/27 : CIA-RDP80B01676R000900070003-5

GAITSKELL: NO APOLOGIES TO SOVIET

MR. GAITSKELL said yesterday that the Labour Party made no apologies for raising the question of the freedom of political prisoners during the visit to Britain of Marshal Bulganin and Mr. Khrushchev. He was commenting on a report in the Russian newspaper Izvestia, regarding the missing British frogman, Commander Crabb. Izvestia stated:

"The Labour leaders wish to make use of this incident to distract the attention of the public from their own actions during the stay in London of Marshal Bulganin and Mr. Khrushchev, actions which, as is well known, were not well-wishing towards the Soviet Union."

The Labour leaders were taking into account the fact that "the Crabb affair" had aroused great alarm and concern, the paper added. The British people understood how incompatible were such actions with "the norms of international law and with the elementary rules of hospitality."

Soviet Campaign

Mr. Gaitskell said: "The Communists are furious that we dared to raise the question of Social Democrats imprisoned in Communist-controlled countries."

"They now try to make out that we are sorry we did so and want to obscure this matter by having a debate on the frogman episode. How little they understand us. We have no regrets and make no apologies for bringing up the question of the freedom of political prisoners which, to us, is a matter of principle."

"We are satisfied that public opinion is overwhelmingly behind us on this. Our only regret is the uncompromisingly hostile reply we received from Mr. Khrushchev."

"As for the frogman affair, it would be the duty of any opposition in Britain to probe such an extraordinary story of muddle and incompetence of a Government Department. It is no doubt difficult for the Communists to understand this, since they do not allow opposition of any kind in the countries which they control."

'SACK MINISTERS'

Mr. Shinwell, Labour M.P. for Easington, said at Houghton-le-Spring, Co. Durham, yesterday. "The first thing to do over the Crabb affair is to make big changes at the Admiralty or in the department responsible. Frankly, I don't believe the nation would suffer if the whole of the Service Ministers, with the exception of Sir Walter Monckton, Defence Minister, were sacked."

Governments had been spying on each other for many years, although it was doubtful whether it was worth the cost. "But when private individuals take a hand, even when they are inspired by some of the clever people in the Admiralty, it is time they were harshly dealt with."

Approved For Release 2003/02/27 : CIA-RDP80B01676R000900070003-5

MAY 13 1956

Approved For Release 2003/02/27 : CIA-RDP80B01676R000900070003-5

AT WESTMINSTER

Diving in Muddied Waters

By A STUDENT OF POLITICS

SIR ANTHONY EDEN and his Government have struck an uncomfortable patch, more frustrating and irritating than dangerous, first through the affair of Commander Crabb, the missing frogman, and then through the revolt of a group of Conservative M.P.s against an important Government Bill.

There is nothing peculiarly calamitous in these troubles, yet their timing is doubly unfortunate for the Prime Minister personally, just when he was very much on the crest, with his prestige and authority restored and his leadership reasserted by his successful handling of the Bulganin and Khrushchev visit.

Some political sludge, but little else, will result from the two hours to be spent in the Commons tomorrow night dredging in the muddied waters of Portsmouth Harbour; but the sharp reactions from Moscow will have come as balm to the Labour leaders' dinner-party wounds.

* * *

EVERYBODY loves a mystery, especially in that borderland between politics and the intelligence services. So the debate may be judged not only good politics, but intriguing to public curiosity as well. There is, however, much more to the present Parliamentary affair than the mere fascination of probing closely guarded secrets. Deeper motives are at play.

It may be doing Mr. Gaitskell and his Front Bench an injustice to suggest that the case of Commander Crabb has been seized upon as a welcome diversion from that bitter dinner-party squabble, but, if suspicious minds think along these lines, the sequence of events must be held responsible.

That, and the contrast between the impetuous haste to demand a debate on the secret details of the events at Portsmouth, and the laboured attempts to avoid a debate on the major international issues of the Russian leaders' talks in Downing Street.

Mr. Alfred Robens was at pains to discover any excuse for not requesting an immediate debate on the B. and K. visit. "Do I gather that the Prime Minister felt it would not be quite proper to have a debate on the White Paper? Would the Prime Minister feel it difficult or embarrassing to have a debate on such a matter?"

Sir Anthony may accordingly well wonder at the excess of sensitivity now prevailing, ~~which reveals that~~ no matter how "embarrassing" or "not quite proper" it may be to the national interest, the Crabb affair must be debated.

FACING the grilling in the Commons, Sir Anthony revealed a new restraint and calm of personality. Not so very long ago he would have bridled angrily and revealed his irritation with cutting, explosive, even short-tempered replies. Angry he undoubtedly was; he reddened fiercely with indignation at Mr. Gaitskell's attack; but he kept a firm check on himself throughout.

In all this the attitude of Mr. Herbert Morrison has given cause for comment. As Minister for Home Security during the war, and with subsequent experience as Foreign Secretary, he has the greatest knowledge on the Opposition side of how the intelligence and security services operate. During the exchanges he stood aside in studied detachment, and is understood to have since urged moderation on his party.

Not that Mr. Morrison has in any way sought to question his leader's policy; but his close friends, who are known to be responsive to his views, say privately and significantly that to rush in with the challenge of a vote of no confidence in the present state of knowledge would be ill-advised.

Some Labour M.P.s are reflecting sombrely whether Earl Attlee would have shown such impetuosity.

EDEN calls FROGMAN TALKS Secret Service chiefs face three demands

By CHAPMAN PINCHER

THE case of frogman Lionel Crabb is to be thrashed out at a special session of the Combined Intelligence Committee — Britain's highest security authority — it was revealed last night.

In this secret conclave of the chiefs of M.I.5, the Secret Service and Forces' Intelligence departments the facts of how Crabb died under the Russian warships in Portsmouth harbour will be disclosed in full—probably for the first time.

Purpose of the session is to meet three demands from Sir Anthony Eden which are an essential part of the "disciplinary action" he has taken to prevent any repetition of such an embarrassing situation.

DEMAND No. 1: The experts

must find some way of allowing closer political control by Ministers over Intelligence work without stifling the initiative of agents or spreading secret information too widely.

Defence Minister Sir Walter Monckton, who is responsible for advising the Cabinet on Intelligence matters, knew nothing about the frogman project.

Neither did his special adviser on scientific intelligence, Mr Eric Williams.

A SUPREME BOSS ?

DEMAND No. 2: There must be much closer control by Intelligence chiefs over what is happening in their departments.

It seems certain that though Naval Intelligence men were involved in the Crabb venture, the Director of Naval Intelligence was not told about it.

DEMAND No. 3: The system whereby "freelance" agents like Commander Crabb are employed by

Intelligence departments must be reviewed and tightened.

The committee may decide that the only solution will be to follow the United States lead and appoint a highly influential man as overall chief of the Intelligence departments.

The United States has a Central Intelligence Agency, headed by Allen Dulles, brother of Foreign Secretary John Foster Dulles.

Britain's Joint Intelligence Bureau, headed by Sir Kenneth Strong, functions as a central clearing house for Intelligence information, but exercises no control over policy.

An alternative and less drastic move would be to appoint a permanent full-time chief for the Combined Intelligence Committee, with powers to range through the whole Intelligence network.

At present the chairman of the committee is a high-level administrative civil servant who has other jobs to do. He is appointed for a two-year term.

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Dulles 5412

Last night you were reviewing the parliamentary debates of May 14 on the Crabb case. Walter Pforzheimer has sent me an earlier exchange between the Prime Minister and Mr. Gaitskell which took place on May 9th. This is attached along with the texts of the Soviet note of May 4th and the British reply thereto of May 9th. In addition, Walter forwarded a few copies of selected news items which he thought might be of interest to you and which I have also attached.

Attachments

fmc
FMC
7 June 1960
(DATE)

FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101
1 AUG 54 WHICH MAY BE USED.

(47)

Cyrus

1756

1757

The Case of

14 MAY 1956

Commander Crabb

1758

i, Rt. Hon. D.
ld, Lt.-Col. W.
Miller, Cmdr. R.
es, R. C.
rd, William
J. E. S. (Middlesbrough, W.)
rs, Peter (Winchester)
Brig. Sir John (Norwood)
i, Capt. G.
an, A. C. M.
h, M.
H. R. Barnes, W.
Rt. Hon. Sir P. (Kensington, S.)
Capt. Hon. Richard
Geoffrey
d, Harold (Stockport, S.)
d, Sir William (Woolwich, W.)
H. Henderson (Fife, E.)
rt-Scott, Col. M.
Rt. Hon. James (Moray)
lms, H. G.
re, G. S. (Aylesbury)
W. D. M. (Orpington)
Sir Charles (Eastbourne)
William (Bradford, N.)
W.
Leslie (Canterbury)
son, Kenneth (Walton)
son, Lt.-Cdr. R. (Croydon, S.)
n, E.
n-Kemley, C. N.
(Bradford, W.)
John (Wavertree)
H. F. L.
Rt. Hon. R. H.
uir, Lady
Morgan, J. K.
Miss J. H.
D. F.
d, Edward (Derbyshire, W.)
smith, D. C.
Jon Patrick
on, George (Worcester)
ame Irene (Tynemouth)
e, Capt. Rt. Hon. G.
n, Rt. Hon. Harold
H.
W.S.I. (Penith & Border)
Paul (Sunderland, S.)
R. Dudley (Exeter)
(Bridgwater)
Geoffrey (Truro)
n, R.
John Victor
lliam (The Wrekin)

CIVIL ESTIMATES, 1956-57 AND NAVY
ESTIMATES, 1956-57

Class I, Vote 4, Treasury and Subordinate Departments	£
Navy Estimates, Vote 12, Admiralty Office	10
	10
	<u>£20</u>

situation, and refrains from pressing these matters, and, of course, Ministers, exercising their undoubted rights, refuse to give information on what I think may be regarded as certain generally accepted assumptions.

These assumptions are: first, that the operations of these services are ultimately and effectively controlled by Ministers or by a Minister; secondly, that their operations are secret; thirdly, that what they do does not embarrass us in our international relations. And perhaps one might add, fourthly, that what they do appears, as far as we can make out, to be reasonably successful—[Laughter].—in this sense, that if there were a widespread feeling that the secret services were extremely incompetent and inept, then it would be the duty of hon. Members to raise the matter.

It is an unfortunate fact that, in the episode which we are discussing, none of these four conditions appears to have been fulfilled. The statement of the Prime Minister makes it plain—at any rate, it gives me the impression—that in this instance Ministers were not ultimately and effectively in control. Secondly, nobody could say that the operations were especially secret. Thirdly, it is a regrettable fact that there has been some embarrassment to international relations. There may be some doubt about success, but I will leave that on one side.

This is one reason why we on the Opposition benches could not be content with the statement made by the Prime Minister last week. Because, cryptic though it was, it revealed through the disclaimer of direct responsibility and through the reference to disciplinary steps, that some wrong action had been taken by a Government servant without the authority and, indeed, apparently contrary to the desires of Ministers.

Now may I say a word about Ministerial responsibility in this matter. It is the custom for Ministers to cover up any decision by a civil servant; that is to say, normally the Minister not merely takes responsibility but appears to have taken that decision himself, whether, in fact, he did so or not. Even when this is not done and, of course, there are quite a number of occasions when it would be pedantic to insist that it should be done; when, in fact, a Minister comes to the House, and says, "One of my

THE CASE OF COMMANDER CRABB

8.18 p.m.

Mr. Hugh Gaitskell (Leeds, South): On 29th April, the Admiralty announced that Commander Lionel Crabb, R.N.V.R., was presumed dead after failing to return from an underwater trial. The statement went on to say that he did not return from a test dive which took place in connection with the trials of certain underwater apparatus in Stokes Bay, in the Portsmouth area, about a week before. Commander Crabb is the central figure in this strange episode which we are discussing in this very short debate this evening.

Therefore, I think it will be appropriate, since I suppose we must accept the conclusion of the Admiralty, if, at the start, on behalf of all of us, I were to pay a tribute to a very gallant officer. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] He was, of course, awarded the George Medal in 1944 for gallantry and undaunted devotion to duty. Whatever may be the circumstances in which he met his death, all of us will agree that this country would be the poorer if it were not for men like Commander Crabb.

In opening this debate, there are certain things I want to make clear about the attitude of the Opposition. First, we recognise the unfortunate necessity, in present conditions, for secret services. Every great Power has such services and, obviously, as with other defences, we cannot do without these. Also, we fully appreciate that details of the activities of these services cannot be disclosed as are the activities of other Government Departments, because to do so would make nonsense of their work. However, I must add this: Parliament accepts that

33 D 21

1759 *The Case of*

14 MAY 1956

Commander Crabb

1760

[MR. GAITSKELL.] "officials made a mistake," thereby implying that he, the Minister, was not directly responsible for that mistake, nevertheless it is a sound and vital constitutional principle that the Minister takes responsibility for what has happened.

That is a principle which I venture to say is fundamental to our democracy, because if we were to depart from it, it would imply that the Civil Service in some way or other was independent and not answerable to this House. Of course, the extent to which we condemn a Minister for an act of one of his officers, or a failure by one of his officers, obviously depends on the circumstances. There are minor occasions when a Minister admits that something has gone wrong and the House accepts it and the matter is left.

Another reason why we felt that we had to discuss this matter further was that other Departments apart from the Secret Service are apparently involved. There is no doubt that the Admiralty was heavily involved. Indeed, one newspaper goes so far as to say today that the Naval Intelligence Department was probably at the centre of the whole thing, and it may be that the Home Office also was involved—

The Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister for Welsh Affairs (Major Gwynn Lloyd-George) indicated dissent.

Mr. Gaitskell: I see the Home Secretary shaking his head, but I would draw his attention to one incident where police officers were involved.

Finally, may I explain that we are discussing this matter on this Motion with particular reference to the salary of the Prime Minister because, first, the right hon. Gentleman himself decided, in answering the Question last Wednesday, to take responsibility for this matter and, therefore, if we wanted to discuss it, that was the correct thing to do; and, secondly, if we had discussed it on the Admiralty Vote alone that would have narrowed the scope of the debate unduly.

Whatever we may feel about this incident, or series of incidents, none of us would ask that the Prime Minister should disclose what ought not to be disclosed, either because it might endanger our agents—one may as well use the word

33 D 22

for the people in our Secret Service—or because it would involve giving information away to a foreign Power, information which, in the opinion of the Government, should be kept from a foreign Power.

Subject to this, I venture to say that it is the duty of any Opposition in this democracy of ours to probe any weakness or what appear to be blunders or mistakes in Government administration. I feel confident that if hon. Members on the other side of the Committee had been in opposition, and a similar episode had occurred, they would, in pursuance of their duty, certainly have raised the matter in the House of Commons.

Subject to the qualification, an important one, which I made about security, I very much hope that the Prime Minister will tonight say all he possibly can to clear up the matter and allay the remaining anxieties. Whether or not we divide the Committee on this issue turns, frankly, entirely on what he can say to us this evening.

I now turn to the case itself. We have very little time and I certainly do not propose to go through the facts, or the apparent facts, in great detail, but the following seems reasonably clear. On 18th April, Commander Crabb went to Portsmouth and stayed at the Sallyport Hotel with another gentleman who registered in the name of Mr. Smith. The next day both of them left the hotel. Mr. Smith returning later to pay the bill and collect the luggage. From this onwards, Commander Crabb disappears. Two days later, the Portsmouth police appear at the hotel and tear out four pages of the hotel register, which of course, included the names of Commander Crabb and his companion. Ten days later the Admiralty issued the statement part of which I read to the Committee at the beginning of my remarks.

On 3rd May—four days afterwards—the Soviet Government sent a Note of protest to the British Government, and in this they made it plain that a protest had been made much earlier by the commanding officer of the Soviet ships in conversation with the chief of staff of the Portsmouth naval base. On this occasion, according to the Soviet Note, the Chief of Staff, who is Rear-Admiral Burnett, categorically rejected the possibility of the appearance of a Soviet ship alongside the Soviet ships and stated that

176
at
ope
of
bol
was
the
30tI
whi
deli
thei
Mir
exp
whi
Mir
to
the
whi
and
in
aboI
I do
as t
proj
Con
“W
if s
was
to f
man
new
cern
cent
I pi
nati
Prin
Sovi
epis
as I
ter's
or a
am
com
by tN
from
seric
inde
first
man
Sovi
the I
The
like
agen
storii

bb 1760
Service—or
information
Government,
in Power.

to say that
situation in this
any weakness
ders or mis-
tration. I
Members on
tee had been
episode had
pursuance of
raised the
mon.

ion, an im-
about security.
Prime Minister
ssibly can to
y the remain-
not we divide
issue turns,
e can say to

itself. We
certainly do
the facts, or
at detail, but
obably clear.

Crabb went

an who regis-

Smith. The

eft the hotel,

o pay the bill

From then
b disappears.
mouth police
tear out four
er, which of
es of Com-
panion. Ten
sued the state-
to the Com-
my remarks.

st afterwards—

nt a Note of

overnment, and

that a protest

arlier by the

Soviet ships

chief of staff

base. On that

Soviet Note,

Rear-Admiral

ected the possi-

bility of a frogman

and stated that

1761 *The Case of*

14 MAY 1956

Commander Crabb

1762

at the time indicated there were no operations in the port involving the use of frogmen. The comment that I feel bound to make at this point is that this was clearly completely contrary to what the Admiralty itself was to say on 30th April.

The British Government in a Note which, according to Moscow, was delivered on 9th May, and presumably, therefore, was sent before the Prime Minister made his statement to us, expressed regret for the incident, a matter which, curiously enough, the Prime Minister did not mention in his statement to us the other day. Finally, we have the Prime Minister's statement to us, which is in the recollection of all of us and to which, therefore, I need not refer in detail. That is all I propose to say about the story of these events.

I wish now to make a few comments. I do not propose to go into great detail, as the newspapers have done. I do not propose to ask every conceivable question such as, for instance, "Where did Commander Crabb get his diving gear?", "Why was not a younger man sent down if somebody had to go?", and, "What was it that Commander Crabb was trying to find out?" All these questions, and many others, have been asked in the newspapers. I repeat that I am not concerned with anything more than the central features of this business. Nor do I propose to say much about the international aspect of the matter. As the Prime Minister has made clear to the Soviet Union, it is a very regrettable episode, but for my part I fully accept, as I am sure we all do, the Prime Minister's disclaimer of Ministerial knowledge or approval. I should like to say that I am sure that that should be accepted as complete evidence of absolute good faith by the Soviet Government as well.

Nor do I feel, though others may differ from me on this, that this episode, serious as it is in certain aspects, and, indeed, deplorable as it was when one first heard about it, is likely to do permanent damage to our relations with the Soviet Government. We all know that the Russians are realists in these matters. There is not very much doubt that they, like other Governments, have their agents, and there have been various stories in the newspapers of similar

occasions to which I will make no further reference.

I am concerned more with what appears to be the situation in the secret service and the forces which work with them because it seems to me that what has been suggested, at any rate by the Prime Minister's statement, and by what we know, reveals a very grave lack of control at home and, indeed, a most unsatisfactory state of affairs within this service.

It seems to me that a great deal turns upon the question of the level at which the decisions were taken. There was an idea at one time when the great bout of speculation was taking place in the Press that possibly the whole thing had been a private effort, that Commander Crabb, financed by a mysterious private organisation, had gone on this investigation and, indeed, that the Government had had nothing to do with it whatever.

Unfortunately—I say, "unfortunately"—the Prime Minister's statement shows, I think, conclusively that that cannot have been so. At least, if it were so, I can only say that it is a great pity that the Prime Minister did not make it clear earlier. I think that we must conclude from his statement—he will correct me if I am wrong—that presumably the Secret Service or a secret service, and the Admiralty must have been mixed up in the plan from the start. Again, I ask at what sort of level was the decision taken, if a decision were taken, to make this kind of investigation. In particular, I think that the Prime Minister might be able to tell us how far this was a matter in which the Admiralty took the initiative.

Having said that, I would wish to pose, if I may, a few central questions which, I repeat, I hope that the Prime Minister will be able to answer within the limits that security permits. We all of us recall that when Mr. Bulganin and Mr. Khrushchev were coming here, a very great deal of attention was concentrated upon the security precautions in connection with their visit and Questions were asked in the House about the number of guards they were to have, and so on. One presumes that in taking these precautions, which we did not criticise and which we accepted, it must have been, must it not, the duty of the Admiralty to guard the Soviet vessels?

1763

The Case of

14 MAY 1956

Commander Crabb

1764

[MR. GAITSKELL.]

That is one of the extraordinary features of the whole business, because if it were the Admiralty's responsibility to guard these vessels, how was it that Commander Crabb, if it was he, was able to approach these vessels? One is bound to ask the question: Was the security guard very, very inadequate or was the guard in the secret of Commander Crabb's exploit?

Again, I come back to the question of the level. It is very difficult to understand how, that being the background, this kind of exploit could have been permitted unless it had been known to some fairly high-ranking officers. I put that as a supposition, and as the honest conclusion to which at the moment, I think, we are drawn by the facts. The second question I would like to ask is, first, what steps were taken, if I may repeat it, to guard these ships? The second question is, who authorised the Admiralty statement on 29th April, which is now seen to have been at variance with the statement of the Chief of Staff at Portsmouth to the Russian admiral, and which, incidentally, was also very much at odds with the Prime Minister's later statement? The third question that I want to put to the Prime Minister is about the strange business of the Portsmouth police descending upon the Sallyport Hotel and tearing out four pages of the register.

Can the Prime Minister tell us under what authority these officers acted? I have made some inquiry into the legal position, with the help of one or two of my hon. Friends, and, as I understand, this is the position. Under the Aliens Order, it is an obligation on any hotel keeper to keep a register of all persons over 16 years old staying at the premises. It is also an obligation on any person of this kind to enter his name, nationality and date of arrival, and the keeper of the hotel has to require him to do so. Furthermore, the keeper of the hotel has to preserve the register for a year after the last entry in it, and it is, of course, open to inspection by any police officer or person authorised by the Home Secretary.

The Portsmouth police came in—in fact, they seized part of this register, although, under the Aliens Order, it was the property of the hotel keeper who is under a statutory duty to preserve it. It

is indeed very hard, therefore, to see what right the police officers had to make the hotel keeper break the law in this way.

There is, of course, the additional piece of information—if it is correct—that the police officers warned the hotel keeper that if he resisted and refused to give up the register they would proceed against him the Official Secrets Act. In exactly what way would the Official Secrets Act come into this? There is, of course, provision under the Official Secrets Act under which it is an offence for a person to retain certain documents when the person having such a document in his possession or control retains it.

"when he has no right to retain it or when it is contrary to his duty to retain it or fails to comply with any directions issued by"

lawful authority
"with regard to the return or disposal thereof."

I think we ought to take that as referring to Civil Service documents and documents of that kind. I am bound to say that it is very difficult to see how a hotel register can come within that particular Section. I would ask, if I may, because this is an important point, what explanation the Prime Minister can give us. I repeat that we realise that the members of that Service have to go about their work in queer ways, but it is a matter of enormous importance that they should not be above the law. What, then, was the law under which they operated?

The next point I wish to ask relates to the Prime Minister's statement about disciplinary steps. Can the right hon. Gentleman tell us against whom and in what manner those steps have been taken? Were any steps taken, for instance, against Service personnel?

Finally, there is a question which I feel I must put out of regard for the relatives of Commander Crabb. Can the Prime Minister say whether the commander—on the assumption, of course, that he was the person involved—believed that the action which he took was fully approved, or did he realise that it was, if it were, purely a private enterprise under-taking? Did he know that there would be this very serious consequence if, in fact, it were discovered?

I will refer here again, if I may, to the statement of the British Government, c

1765

rather than to the Admiralty, to see what seems to fairness that this is set up—that without

"The Soviet No ships swin was to a His preser occurred and Her regret for

If that had gor genuine with the own initi think, is ought to of course

To dra are, whic is impossion avai I do not hope, fr reassurin from the him that lished in and by v with the sion has deplorab control t Secret Se secondly, technical created.

The bu was bou the who apparent went to deal of the ques mander in some say, give technical Thirdly, sion of a which is

I repe level the ticularly if, in fac

er Crabb 1764
 before, to see what had to make the law in this way.
 e additional piece correct—that the hotel keeper refused to give up proceed against Act. In exactly Official Secrets Act is, of course, pro-Secrets Act under or a person to re-when the person in his possession

retain it or when to retain it or fails -ns issued by"

return or disposal

ake that as refer-documents and

I am bound to ult to see how a within that pard ask, if I may, rtant point, what Minister can give alise the need for realise that the have to go about ays, but it is a rtance that they the law. What, der which they

ah to ask relates statement about

the right hon. st whom and in teps have been taken, for in-personnel?

uestion which I ggard for the relarabb. Can the her the command, of course, that ed—believed that look was fully se that it was, as enterprise underthat there would nsequence if, in

t, if I may, to the Government, or

1765 The Case of

14 MAY 1956

Commander Crabb 1766

rather the letter of the British Government, to the Russian Government which seems to imply—as I say, I think out of fairness to Commander Crabb's relatives this is something that should be cleared up—that he swam to the ~~Russian vessel~~ without permission. The Note says:

"The frogman, who, as reported in the Soviet Note, was discovered from the Soviet ships swimming between the Soviet destroyers, was to all appearances Commander Crabb. His presence in the vicinity of the destroyers occurred without any permission whatever, and Her Majesty's Government express their regret for this incident."

If that were true and if, in fact, he had gone to Portsmouth simply on genuine trials not connected in any way with the Soviet vessels and had, on his own initiative, swum off to them, that, I think, is something which the Government ought to make plain. If it is not so, then, of course, it is a different matter.

To draw the conclusions, such as they are, which one can from this business, it is impossible for us on the hard information available to pass any final judgment. I do not seek to do so. I would still hope, frankly, that a fuller and more reassuring explanation were forthcoming from the Prime Minister, but I must tell him that so far, by what has been published in the Press, by what he has said and by what is in the exchange of Notes with the Soviet Government, an impression has been created, first, of the most deplorable lack of co-ordination and control between the Foreign Office, the Secret Service and the Admiralty; and, secondly, that an impression of unusual technical incompetence has also been created.

The business of the hotel register, which was bound to attract public attention to the whole matter, the way in which, apparently, before Commander Crabb went to Portsmouth there was a great deal of free talk by all sorts of people, the questioning at a later stage of Commander Crabb's friends, which is reported in some of the Press—none of this, I must say, gives one much confidence in the technical efficiency of the Service. Thirdly, I think that it gives an impression of a degree of political unawareness which is almost frightening.

I repeat that a lot depends on at what level these decisions were taken, but particularly in regard to the political aspects if, in fact, the decisions were taken at a

high level. Then it shows, as *The Times* said in a very penetrating leader: "irresponsibility just where irresponsibility should not exist."

If, on the other hand, it was at a lower level, it suggests that the people there, the officers there, have got altogether out of hand.

I must say this to the Prime Minister, and I know he will accept it: it is his burden and responsibility to look after the Secret Service. These matters of which I have spoken and the reflections on the efficiency of Service co-ordination, and so on, which I have mentioned are essentially matters for the Prime Minister. I would ask him, is he satisfied in the light of what has happened with the staffing of the security services? What steps is he taking, or has he taken, to prevent this sort of thing happening again? Is he satisfied—I am sure he will not take offence at this at all—that he, the Prime Minister of the day, who has these enormous responsibilities over the whole field of government, is really in a position to be the only Minister to keep an adequate control on the Secret Service? Can he, in fact, do this job as it should be done directly himself?

Those are the questions we should like the Prime Minister to answer bearing in mind, I repeat, the security aspect, which cannot be overlooked. I have tried to put our case and our anxieties on this in as responsible a manner as I can. I realise to the full the delicate nature of the subject we are discussing very briefly this evening, but, while we must be careful and while we must be cautious, democracy also must be made to work. We, as the Parliament in a democracy, have the right to have our fears allayed, our anxieties extinguished; or at any rate we have the right to be satisfied that the Government are taking steps to put matters right.

8.49 p.m.

The Prime Minister (Sir Anthony Eden): The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Leeds, South (Mr. Gaitskell) has reminded us—and rightly reminded us, if I may say so—that it is a very rare proceeding to refuse to disclose public events or events which have become talked about merely on the ground that in the Government's judgment it is not in the public interest to do so.

33 D 25

1767

The Case of

14 MAY 1956

Commander Crabb

1768

[THE PRIME MINISTER.]

Of course, we live, as we all know, in an age of publicity, and in some quarters it seems to be thought that there is nothing which should be withheld from public examination, discussion and debate. That was not, I was glad to note, the right hon. Gentleman's position tonight. Nonetheless, Parliament has preserved the long-established convention that a responsible Minister may decline to give information, if, in his judgment, it is not in the public interest to do so.

We are dealing tonight, I must say frankly to the House, with circumstances in which no Government here or in any other country, I believe, would say more than I am prepared to say to the House tonight; nor is there anything contrary to our practice, as the House knows, in taking this action. It is often done in defence. A classic example was the atomic bomb, where the whole expenditure—£100 million—was concealed in the Estimates for a number of years.

Similarly in international affairs—let me say this, because the right hon. Gentleman asked a question—it is often contrary to the public interest to disclose the details of correspondence with a foreign Government or to reveal the course of negotiations with a foreign Government leading up to treaties or other agreements, and it is in any event the immemorial custom not to publish the receipt of a Note until the reply has been returned and received by the Power which sent the Note. I shall have something more to say about that in a moment.

Again, to take our domestic affairs, there are many things which my right hon. and gallant Friend the Home Secretary, for instance, is not obliged to state publicly. He has not to disclose the grounds on which he has decided to deport an alien or those on which he grants or refuses a certificate of naturalisation. I say this to show that I agree with the right hon. Gentleman; I think we are in agreement that there can be no dispute about the general principle that there are certain things which it is against the national interest to disclose.

The right hon. Gentleman has spoken very freely about the secret services and speculated about their control, their organisation, and their efficiency. I am

sorry to have to say that I am not prepared to discuss those matters in the House. It is easy—and I am not complaining—for the right hon. Gentleman to suggest or imply that all is not well. I could not answer him, because I could not answer him either generally or in detail without disclosing matters which, as he must recognise, must remain secret. That is why it is not the practice and it never has been the practice to discuss these matters openly in the House, and I am not prepared to break that precedent.

I think it must be clear that it must be left to the discretion of Ministers to decide these matters. Only the Minister can judge; his discretion in this particular respect is absolute. It should be clear from this practice that the Minister can not disclose the reasons for his decision. Obviously, if he were to disclose his reasons, it would be disclosing what he judged to be contrary itself to the public interest.

That is certainly the position in this instance, and therefore on this particular aspect of the matter I must tell the House now that I have not one word more to say than I announced on Wednesday. But I should like to comment on the second part of the statement which I made in the House last week and to which the right hon. Gentleman referred.

I then took the exceptional course of making it plain that what was done was done without the authority of Her Majesty's Ministers. That, of course, includes all Her Majesty's Ministers and all aspects of this affair. We all know, in fact, that many actions are taken by servants of the Crown for which the authority of Ministers is not asked and, of course, that must always be so in any complex society such as ours today. The right hon. Gentleman is perfectly correct in saying that on these occasions it is nonetheless accepted that Ministers of the Government, collectively, are responsible to Parliament for the actions of officials

I pondered long before I departed from that axiom in this case, and I think that the Committee is, perhaps—if I may say so, entitled to know more of the topic in the light of what the right hon. Gentleman said. In this instance there were special circumstances which, I judged, compelled me to state that what had happened, or was thought to have happened, had been done without the authority of Ministers.

1769

At that time been conduct with the Sovi completely unawa kind. Had I n doubt would i on the sincer those discussi and a very e explains to account. I the very unusual c statement.

That brings statement whi which the rig ferred. Havi was done v Ministers I al it be known : being taken. an answer to man has just s ernment are c be exercised of this kind.

It has bee another poi Gentlemen m very much, to informing the of our receip of our reply holding back House ought Of course, th Note was del by messenger The Foreign myself appro Government course, I was House on V Government received our discourteous, disclosed di such circums So far as I absolutely no all civilised beginning of

At the sa will see, the inconsistent given to the statement to pared the tw 33 D

Commander Crabb 1768

To say that I am not pre-
ss those matters in the
easy—and I am not com-
he right hon. Gentleman
nly that all is not well,
wer him, because I could
either generally or in
disclosing matters which
guise, must remain secret;
s not the practice and it
the practice to discuss
only in the House, and I
to break that precedent.
be clear that it must be
cretion of Ministers to
ters. Only the Minister
cretion in this particu-
lute. It should be clear
easons for his decision.
were to disclose his
be disclosing what he
ary itself to the public

Iy the position in this
fore on this particular
r I must tell the House
not one word more to
ed on Wednesday. But
comment on the second
ent which I made in
ck and to which the
an referred.

exceptional course of
t what was done was

authority of Her

That, of course, in-

sty's Ministers and all

ir. We all know, in

ons are taken by ser-

for which the autho-

not asked and, of

ways be so in any

as ours today. The

is perfectly correct

these occasions it is

that Ministers of the

very, are responsible

actions of officials.

fore I departed from

se, and I think that

haps—if I may say

more of this topic

the right hon. Gentle-

instance there were

which, I judged,

state that what

thought to have

done without the

1769 The Case of

14 MAY 1956

Commander Crabb 1770

At that time my colleagues and I had been conducting important discussions with the Soviet leaders. We were completely unaware of any episode of this kind. Had I not made that clear publicly, doubt would inevitably have been thrown on the sincerity of our position during those discussions. That is a very serious and a very exceptional situation, but it explains to the House why, on that account, I thought it right to take the very unusual course I did of making that statement.

That brings me to the third part of the statement which I made last week and to which the right hon. Gentleman has referred. Having made it clear that what was done without the authority of Ministers I also found it necessary to let it be known that disciplinary steps were being taken. That in itself is, in part, an answer to what the right hon. Gentleman has just said. It shows that the Government are determined that the proper measures of control and authority should be exercised by Ministers in all matters of this kind.

It has been suggested—and this was another point which the right hon. Gentleman made; and it has been made very much, too, in the Press—that by not informing the House on Wednesday last of our receipt of the Russian Note and of our reply thereto I was in some way holding back information of which the House ought to have been made aware. Of course, that was not so. The Soviet Note was delivered to the Foreign Office by messenger on Friday night, 4th May. The Foreign Secretary being away ill, I myself approved the answer to the Soviet Government on Wednesday morning. Of course, I was aware when I spoke to the House on Wednesday that the Soviet Government could not by then have received our reply. It would have been discourteous, to say the least, to have disclosed diplomatic correspondence in such circumstances, and I did not do so. So far as I know that has been the absolutely normal practice followed by all civilised Governments from the beginning of time.

At the same time, as the Committee will see, there is nothing in the least inconsistent between the reply we have given to the Soviet Government and my statement to the House. I carefully compared the two myself. The only difference

33 D 27

—and it is a difference—is that the reply to the Soviet Note deals with the actual queries raised in the Soviet communication, whereas my reply to the House was couched as a Parliamentary Answer.

Now, as to the later publication of the Note, I realised, of course, that the Soviet Government might publish both communications. Of course, I understood that. But even so, I submit to the Committee that it would not have been possible for me to communicate either the facts or the texts of the Notes in advance of the receipt of our reply by the Soviet Government.

But in this business I do not rest only on the national interest. The national interest is of first importance to us in the House of Commons, but there is also in this business a very important international interest, and I confess that all I care for is that the outcome of our discussions with the Soviet leaders should in truth prove to be, as I have said, the beginning of a beginning. I intend to safeguard that possibility at all costs. I believe that that is also in the minds of the Soviet leaders, and it is for that reason that I deplore this debate and will say no more.

9.2 p.m.

Mr. F. J. Bellenger (Bassetlaw): May I say this by way of preface. The Soviet Government is the last Government on earth to make an incident out of this affair. But, listening to the Prime Minister this evening, I would personally have been quite content if he had stopped short at the first part of his statement last week. If he had said that this was a matter of public security, I do not think anybody could have questioned him on his judgment.

The Prime Minister, however, went on to open all sorts of speculative fields, as he has done in the Press. Incidentally, it seems a paradox that only the public Press can discuss this matter more fully than Parliament. The Prime Minister can apparently get up and say, as he said tonight, "I have nothing to say," and Parliament is gagged at once. But the public Press is allowed to chase all sorts of hares and to question all sorts of people.

Where, possibly, the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister has made a mistake is in saying that he was going to take disciplinary action and not tell the

1771 *The Case of*

14 MAY, 1956

Commander Crabb 1772

[MR. BELLENGER.]

House what that action was to be. We may be stopped from questioning the Prime Minister, I understand, because of public security considerations, but surely Parliament has a right to ask the Prime Minister whether he is acting rightly in taking disciplinary action against some person or persons unknown.

After all, Parliament is the protector of the individual, and, for all we know, the Prime Minister may be making a mistake, as the Government has done before, notably in the Burgess and Maclean case, which to a certain extent disclosed similar errors of judgment on the part of officials, and Parliament has no method of redress. All that can happen is that a committee of Privy Councillors is set up, some whitewashing statement is made and Parliament has to accept it.

I do not want to question the Prime Minister any more than my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, South (Mr. Gaitskell) did about the public security issue. What I say to the Prime Minister is this. Having been in charge of a Service Department myself, I should like to know whether he is quite sure that Ministers, and Service Ministers particularly, have complete control over their Secret Service, their Intelligence, as he led us to believe in what he said tonight. I should not be at all surprised if Service Ministers, in particular, do not know what their Intelligence does. Yet they are asked to take complete responsibility, even to signing for the expenditure of these secret service sections of their Departments, without knowing one iota of what is happening.

If we are to have a Secret Service, surely it should be secret. In this case, it has been nothing of the sort; the newspapers have been allowed to speculate. The Prime Minister may say we would surely not ask him to exercise any control over the public Press. He asks Parliament to be discreet; why does he not ask the newspapers to act in the same way? Every morning, as the Prime Minister knows, there is a conference at the Foreign Office which journalists are able to attend and question the official spokesmen. Why, therefore, can the Prime Minister, or somebody else, not make sure that not only is Parliament stopped from pursuing these matters fully,

but, also, that some restraint is exercised by the public Press, especially the popular Press, which may do a great deal of damage to international and national security?

Obviously, we cannot pursue this matter further by asking the Prime Minister to divulge what actually did happen; but, in spite of what he said, the public are disturbed at something happening which ought not to have happened, and the public is further of the opinion—as, I think, are many hon. Members of this Committee—that neither the Prime Minister nor his Departmental Ministers have over the Secret Service that control which Parliament voting the money would expect.

I would, therefore, ask the Prime Minister whether he can take some action to ensure that bureaucrats and public officials do not cut right across the policy of the Government of the day and cause international tension, as might have been possible in this case, which has enabled the Soviet Government to hold this country and Her Majesty's Government up to ridicule.

9.7 p.m.

Sir Patrick Spens (Kensington, South): I want to say a few words tonight on the constitutional aspect of this debate. I am old enough, and I have been long enough a Member of the House, to have been present on many an occasion when the House desired to get information from Ministers of the Crown and the Ministers claimed they were quite unable to answer on the ground of public security. Time after time, when that has happened, that has been an end of the matter. This is the first time in my experience that a responsible Opposition has, through a most responsible leader, in a most responsible speech, none the less done what I consider to be a most irresponsible thing. It has followed the line which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bassettlaw (Mr. Bellenger) condemns in the Press. It has tried to get information on a matter of public security by baiting the Prime Minister by a series of questions.

I very nearly rose on a point of order when the debate began, because I believe that this debate is contrary to all our precedents. I do not believe that ever before, when a solemn answer has been given on one day of the week to

1773 *The Ca*

govt; information t
against public pol
public interest, h
carried further—sti
state of this natu

Mr. Percy Collic
the right hon. and
this Chambe

Sir P. Spens: I
Minister of the C
responsibility upon
impossible to give t
because public secu
no other resp
inside or outside
attempt to carry the
way. It is the respo
and always has bee
sidered answer wh
until this debate
if a practice had r
the way in which
ught.

Mr. Donald Ch
Northfield) rose—

Sir P. Spens: Le
responsibility lie
the Crown for the
access not matter v
When they are in
a statement that it
information because
against public secu
the House, by a se
digging at the Minis
to get him to go a
opinion. There was
tion which was a
Minister tonight, b
hon. Gentlemen of
been answered wou
in my right hon. l
very thing that he
disclose.

Mr. Chapman:
police?

Sir P. Spens: Tl
much a matter of p
thing else. There
as long as I ha
as much to do wit
he does not know
the police have to
interests of public

Mr. Chapman:
law

Commander Crabb 1772

omic restraint is exercised
ess, especially the popular
ay do a great deal of
international and national

cannot pursue this matter
g the Prime Minister to
ually did happen; but,
he said, the public are
ething happening which
ve happened, and the
of the opinion—as, I
hon. Members of this
neither the Prime
Departmental Ministers
ret Service that control
t voting the money

fore, ask the Prime
can take some action
reacutars and public
right across the policy
of the day and cause
as might have been
z, which has enabled
ment to hold this
Majesty's Government

(Kensington, South):
words tonight on
pect of this debate.
d I have been long
the House, to have
y an occasion when
to get information
e Crown and the
were quite unable
ground of public
ime, when that has
zen an end of the
first time in my
onsible Opposition
responsible leader,
speech, none the
ider to be a most
has followed the
n. Gentleman the
(Mr. Bellenger)
It has tried to
matter of public
Prime Minister
s.

a point of order
because I believe
trary to all our
-ieve that ever
answer has been
e week that to

1773

The Case of

14 MAY 1956

Commander Crabb 1774

give information to the House will be
against public policy and against the
public interest, has the matter been
carried further—still less, by a planned
debate of this nature.

Mr. Percy Collick (Birkenhead): Does
the right hon. and learned Gentleman
think this Chamber is the Reichstag?

Sir P. Spens: Once the responsible
Minister of the Crown, accepting full
responsibility upon himself, has said it is
impossible to give the public information
because public security is involved, it be-
hooves no other responsible citizen, be he
inside or outside this Committee, to
attempt to carry the matter further in this
way. It is the responsibility of Ministers,
and always has been to give, such a con-
sidered answer when the occasion arises.
Until this debate was opened tonight,
that practice had never been challenged
in the way in which it is being challenged
tonight.

Mr. Donald Chapman (Birmingham,
Northfield) rose

Sir P. Spens: Let me finish.

Responsibility lies with Ministers of
the Crown for the safety of the country.
It does not matter who the Ministers are.
When they are in office and they make
a statement that it is impossible to give
information because to do so would be
against public security, it is hopeless for
the House, by a series of questions, by
digging at the Minister concerned, to try
to get him to go against his considered
opinion. There was not one single ques-
tion which was asked of the Prime
Minister tonight, by either of the right
hon. Gentlemen opposite, which had it
been answered would not have resulted
in my right hon. Friend disclosing the
very thing that he has said he will not
disclose.

Mr. Chapman: What about the
police?

Sir P. Spens: The police are just as
much a matter of public security as any-
thing else. There is nobody who has
lived as long as I have, and who has had
as much to do with the law as I have,
who does not know that time after time
the police have to take action in the
interests of public security.

Mr. Chapman: They are above the
law.

33 D 29

Sir P. Spens: Of course, they are not
above the law—they are right within the
law. They are acting on their orders,
but the orders which are given to them
have been given them and cannot be dis-
closed for reasons of public security.

This goes to the very root of demo-
cracy. We have a General Election and
we elect a Government, and we put into
the seat of Government men whom the
country chooses and trusts. They are
responsible for the safety and security of
the country. When they give their con-
sidered view that the details of some-
thing cannot be disclosed because it is
a question of public security, then I say
that every responsible citizen, inside the
House and outside, must accept that, and
accept it willingly, as the very basis of
public security.

9.13 p.m.

Mr. John Dugdale (West Bromwich):
The Prime Minister's statement that it
was deplorable that there should be a
debate has been answered by the very
responsible manner in which my right
hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition
raised the debate. Had we not raised
this subject, we as an Opposition would
have been guilty of a grave dereliction
of duty in not probing a little further
into this affair.

The Prime Minister says that he can-
not answer certain questions—of course,
he cannot. We agree there are many
questions he cannot answer.

Mr. Sydney Silverman (Nelson and
Colne): But there are some questions
which he can answer.

Mr. Dugdale: Yes, there are some
questions which he can answer. Some of
the questions which my right hon. Friend
asked him he could answer.

The thing we are concerned with is
what appears to be the great lack of co-
ordination between different Departments.
What was the aim of this operation? Its
aim, apparently, was to get information
for the Navy, and yet the Commander-
in-Chief at Portsmouth did not want the
operation to take place. Surely he must
have had some say. Surely somebody
pays attention to what he says. When it
was known, as it was known—it must
have been known—by the Admiralty that
this operation was to take place, surely
the information should have been con-
veyed to the First Lord of the Admiralty.

1775

The Case of

14 MAY 1956

Commander Crabb

1776

1777

The

[MR. DUGDALE.]

The Prime Minister says that the First Lord of the Admiralty did not know. Naturally, I accept the Prime Minister's word for it, but that is a deplorable state of affairs when it is the First Lord of the Admiralty who has to make political decisions, if he has to do anything at all in the Admiralty. Surely he should be the person to make the decision.

How do we know that the naval officers at Portsmouth did know about it? Commander Crabb asked to borrow equipment from H.M.S. "Vernon" and he was refused. It was said there, "We shall not lend you the equipment". Obviously, he wanted to get accommodation of the most convenient character, and, naturally, he would have stayed in an Admiralty establishment, or else in a private house belonging to an officer of the Admiralty, if he could, but the Admiralty did not want him to do so, and the Commander-in-Chief, Portsmouth, did not want him to. So he had to resort to this extraordinary business of staying in an hotel, and signing the register, while his companion signed it with the wrong name.

If the Commander-in-Chief, Portsmouth, had really wanted this to take place, surely he would have given some help to Commander Crabb. Apparently, no help was given. If he did not want it to take place he would have conveyed his disapproval to the Admiralty. It seems very strange that one of the high rank of the Commander-in-Chief, Portsmouth, should not be able somehow or another to reach a member of the Board of Admiralty. I cannot understand where the stoppage took place en route, but, apparently, there was a stoppage somewhere, and, apparently, the information never reached the Board of Admiralty.

These are some of the things for which we condemn the Government. I do not say we want to know about them. We shall not ask any questions about them. [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh, no."] We will not. However, we do ask the Prime Minister to see that the Admiralty and the Secret Service are reorganised in such a way that these things do not occur again. Plainly, there has been a stoppage in the flow of information which should have flowed to the top, where decision lies, and it is the responsibility of the Prime Minister to see that this sort of

The right hon. Gentleman says that he is not responsible for the details of Secret Service work. Of course he is not, and we do not want to ask him questions about them, but we do say he has the responsibility for choosing the people who should be at the top of the Secret Service, and we want to know that he has confidence in their judgment. We want to know, in particular, that when he says that disciplinary action has been taken it has been taken not against junior people but against those at the top for failing to control those below them. Perhaps these things have been done. I do not know. However, it seems to me likely that they may not have been done.

A few years ago there was a case which was called the Chichester Down case. It was a very different type of case, but as in this case a Minister was apparently misled by his officials and got into a great deal of difficulty. He had the courage to accept responsibility, and he resigned. His action was very creditable indeed and we on this side of the Committee respect him for it, as, I think, many hon. Friends of his opposite do.

I think that the Prime Minister should have given us a very much clearer explanation, and that he must reassure us, if we are to rest content with what he says, that steps are being taken to reorganise both the Secret Service and the Admiralty that this sort of thing can never happen again.

9.19 p.m.

Lieut.-Colonel J. K. Cordeaux (Nottingham, Central): The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bassettlaw (Mr. Bellinger) was deplored the publicity that this unfortunate episode has obtained in the Press. I am sure we all agree with him about that. However, I am sure we should not all agree with him when he suggests that it might have been obviated by a hint from Ministers. I think that would have been deplored by most people. The fault for that publicity lies mainly, I am sorry to say, with the members of the various secret services concerned.

In former times it was the first rule for all members of those services that the nature of their work must never be disclosed to another man or woman. In fact, it was their duty to carry the secrets of their adventures and triumphs with

there have been
not been living
have been cash
of secret work
newspaper artic
if they do that,
much when eq
their blunders

It was only la
debating in th
which concerr
services, in tha
We were deb
Burgess and
which seemed
in conjunction
Dr. Nunn May
Pontecorvo, w
ion, to feel t
dealing with a
the man wh
reason of pers
outs loyalty to
loyalty to his o

I believe tha
is to lose faith
present in the
positive espion
all, this partic
of Burgess and
there is certa
otherwise—an
think that on th
any right to cor
ge services, w
nufficient.

Indeed, in a
Member for Le
who did critici
should like to c
say by quotin
which were ma
the very best
officers in Ger
of the German
in Holland dur
who was himse
the greatest dis
own undergrou
uisse, and wh
them was this:

"I was now
per westwards a
activity was takin
on those dark w
them—activity o
experience
the conduct o
had a whole se
previous year in
which had show

Commander Crabb 1776

hon. Gentleman says that he
sible for the details of Secret
Of course he is not, and
want to ask him questions
but we do say he has the
for choosing the people
be at the top of the Secret
we want to know that he
ce in their judgment. We
in particular, that when he
ciplinary action has been
en taken not against junior
against those at the top for
rol those below them. Per-
ngs have been done. I do
However, it seems to me
may not have been done,
ago there was a case which
Crichel Down case. It
ferent type of case, but as
Minister was apparently
ficials and got into a great
y. He had the courage to
ibility, and he resigned.
very creditable indeed, and
of the Committee respect
think, many hon. Friends
do.

he Prime Minister should
a very much clearer ex-
that he must reassure us,
est content with what he
are being taken so to
the Secret Service and
that this sort of thing can
ain.

J. K. Cordeaux (Notting-
The right hon. Gentleman
Bassetlaw (Mr. Bellenger)
e publicity that this un-
has obtained in the
we all agree with him
ever, I am sure we
gree with him when he
ight have been obviated
Ministers. I think that
en deplored by most
It for that publicity lies
y to say, with the mem-
us secret services con-

it was the first rule for
those services that the
ork must never be dis-
man or woman. In
uty to carry the secrets
es and triumphs with
Unfortunately, lately

1777 The Case of

14 MAY 1956

Commander Crabb 1778

there have been some people who have
not been living up to that tradition, but
have been cashing in on their knowledge
of secret work in the form of film rights,
newspaper articles and books. Of course,
if they do that, they cannot complain too
much when equal publicity is given to
their blunders and failures.

It was only last November that we were
debating in the House another episode
which concerned one of our secret
services, in that case our security service.
We were debating the failure in the
Burgess and Maclean case, a failure
which seemed all the worse when taken
in conjunction with the previous cases of
Dr. Nunn May, Dr. Fuchs, and Professor
Pontecorvo, which lead us, in conjunc-
tion, to feel that we were engaged in
dealing with a new type of enemy agent
—the man who works, not for the old
reason of personal gain, but because he
puts loyalty to a political ideology before
loyalty to his own country.

I believe that it would be wrong for
us to lose faith in the services that are at
present in the dock—that is to say, our
positive espionage work—because, after
all, this particular case, unlike the case
of Burgess and Maclean, is, I suggest—
there is certainly nothing to suggest
otherwise—an isolated case. I do not
think that on the strength of that we have
any right to condemn our positive espionage
services, whatever they may be, as
inefficient.

Indeed, in answer to the right hon.
Member for Leeds, South (Mr. Gaitskell),
who did criticise them for inefficiency, I
should like to condense what I wanted to
say by quoting to him some remarks
which were made about them by one of
the very best known counter-espionage
officers in Germany. He was the head
of the German counter-espionage forces
in Holland during the last war—a man
who was himself responsible for one of
the greatest disasters that ever befell our
own underground forces. His name was
Giske, and what he had to say about
them was this:

"I was now facing my own problem, to
peer westwards and discover what secret enemy
activity was taking place beneath those stars,
on those dark waters, and in the air above
them—activity of an enemy famous for his
long experience and unexcelled in his skill
at the conduct of underground warfare. We
had a whole series of instructive lessons the
previous year in France, Norway and Greece;
which had shown me clearly what it might

mean to face the experienced toughness of the
British Secret Service in combination with an
elite of Dutch volunteers willing to risk their
lives."

From that, I do not mean that I am
trying to excuse the conduct of the opera-
tion which we have under discussion to-
night. It would be impossible to do so.
It seems to me that it was approved mis-
takenly and rashly and was ineptly
carried out. Indeed, one feels alarmed
for the higher direction of whatever ser-
vice might be concerned when we con-
sider that, after all, although initiative is
one of the greatest qualities required in
any such service, it seems incredible that
such an operation could have been sanc-
tioned except by the head of whatever
organisation it was. It is strange and
unfortunate that it was done even by such
a person without informing someone of
still more importance.

To the non-technical critic it seems
that the positive information that might
be obtained would in no way be commen-
surate with the seriousness of the act and
the natural embarrassment to interna-
tional relations which would follow.
Lower down the scale in the planning and
conduct of the operation, Commander
Crabb was of an age where he should
hardly have been chosen for an operation
so hazardous and difficult. The entry in
the hotel register and the clumsy attempt
at deletion suggest a quality in trade
craft to which it is best not to refer.

I referred just now to the embarrass-
ment to international relations which
such a failure might cause. I am certain
that no stronger phrase would be here
applicable. After all, the duty of every
intelligence service is to obtain informa-
tion about the war potential of other
countries and it is the duty of secret in-
telligence services to obtain such informa-
tion secretly. Every major Power, our-
selves, the United States, Russia and all
the rest, as the right hon. Member for
Leeds, South said, employs such services
and such services have been employed
since the beginning of history.

Other weapons have come and gone.
In the course of a few hundred years
we have seen the bow and arrow give way
to the cannon ball and gunpowder, and
from that we have gone to high explosive,
aircraft, tanks, poison gas and guided
missiles to the final horror of the
hydrogen bomb; but espionage has re-
mained constant and an essential branch

33 D 31

1779 *The Case of*

14 MAY 1956

Commander Crabb 1780

[LIEUT.-COLONEL CORDEAUX.]
of war. The spy—the secret agent it is better to call him—has remained and has always been the oldest of all weapons, indeed, dating from 3,400 years ago, as we can read in Joshua, Chapter 2:

"... Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly. . . ." For that reason, I am absolutely convinced that the Russians will attach very little importance to this episode. The right hon. Member for Leeds, South said so in so many words. I think that the Russians will be very little irritated by it, just as they will not expect us to be particularly irritated by the episode of Burgess and Maclean.

The two episodes were the same in that they were normal—I think I can use the word "normal"—use of espionage. They differed in that the Russian employment of Burgess and Maclean was brilliantly successful, whereas our effort to inspect the hull of the Russian cruiser was not. They differed in another respect, namely, that the Russian Government did know of the employment of Burgess and Maclean, whereas my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister did not know of the employment of Commander Crabb.

It is perfectly obvious that the Russians have neither the right, nor are they likely to object—I do not think that that is putting it too high—even in their hearts to what has happened. This unfortunate episode is, therefore, not in the least likely in any way to impair the value of the Russian visit to this country, nor in any way to detract from the magnificent job which my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has done, not merely in organising that visit, but in the brilliant manner in which he conducted the negotiations here.

Finally, I want to add my tribute to the central figure of this operation. Whoever may have employed Commander Crabb, he obeyed his orders, he was a patriot and he was a brave man. In paying my tribute to him I would like to think that I am also paying it to all the thousands of other men of his profession, the other agents who have served and died for this country.

The secret agent in war, though not always in peace, is the bravest man of all. The ordinary soldier, sailor and airman face danger willingly, but they

face it in comradeship. The secret agent faces it alone. The soldier, the sailor and the airman face death willingly, but death is the worst thing they face. To the secret agent who is captured death is probably not to him the ultimate sacrifice which he hopes to avoid, but the merciful relief for which he prays. So I hope very much that though this unfortunate episode, the last in Commander Crabb's life, may be forgotten as soon as possible, he and his former record will never be forgotten.

9.32 p.m.

Mr. George Wigg (Dudley): If the obituary notice in *The Times* is to be believed, Commander Crabb rejoined the Royal Navy over a year ago. So I join with my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, South (Mr. Gaitskell) in paying a tribute to the memory of a very gallant officer.

When I listened to the concluding words of the Prime Minister I felt that this was a masterly exposition by a great Parliamentarian. The right hon. Gentleman had control of the House and was saying to us that the national interest must be paramount but, over and above that, the one thing he wanted is to get agreement with the Russians. That is the recipe of the Prime Minister tonight, his excuse for trying to rescue his party from a difficult position—[An HON. MEMBER: "Try to rescue yourself."] I shall come to that in a moment, with no holds barred.

Those noble words were not the words of the handout issued by the Conservative Party Central Office of his Perth speech last week. There the right hon. Gentleman could not resist a cheap party jibe. The Prime Minister said:

"To be strong you do not need to be rude; to be firm, you do not need to be rude."

There, of course, the Prime Minister was not talking about Anglo-Soviet relations as something that transcended even the national interest; the right hon. Gentleman was seeking to make party capital at the lowest possible level. I do not complain of that but, of course, if the right hon. Gentleman says that at Perth and then makes the peroration that he does tonight, perhaps I shall be forgiven if the thought passes through my mind—he is an able Parliamentarian but he is also a complete humbug.

1781 *The C*

What the hon. a Nottingham, Ce Cordeaux) said sq hon. Gentleman Lord nor the Fir holding their pre without pressing t point of secrecy, i the night of 29th o' the Board political or naval the statement th had met his de service Departm the country and i tens have been i stage of internat cut the knowled the political or either or both, prompting fror benchers, should to the Prime M

The central p what Command who instructed h the night of the Admiralty, and without any teered the inform sible for what l Crabb.

There is one which I ask th leve that I fe le does. I a bout the state country, I be deplorably wea the fact that v money have be as I watch the paganda that i he Admiralty action to justif of £350 million

What did those who ins out? Surely it to justify the being put ac Russian fleet i the maintainin forces. I bel taking places jeopardy, for expenditure is for calm and fore, from eve

33 D 3

Commander Crabb 1780

adeship. The secret agent
The soldier, the sailor
face death willingly, but
rst thing they face. To the
ho is captured death is
him the ultimate sacrifice
to avoid, but the merciful
he prays. So I hope
though this unfortunate
in Commander Crabb's
written as soon as possible,
er record will never be

Wigg (Dudley): If the
in *The Times* is to be
nder Crabb rejoined the
a year ago. So I join
Friend the Member
(Mr. Gaitskell) in paying
emory of a very gallant

to the concluding words
nister I felt that this
exposition by a great
The right hon. Gentle-
of the House and was
the national interest
t but, over and above
g he wanted is to get
e Russians. That is
ime Minister tonight,
ng to rescue his party
position—[An HON.
rescue yourself."] I
in a moment, with no

s were not the words
d by the Conservative
of his Perth speech
e right hon. Gentle-
a cheap party jibe.
said:

not need to be mute;
need to be rude."

Prime Minister was
lgo-Soviet relations
nscreed even the
right hon. Gentle-
ake party capital at
el. I do not com-
course, if the right
that at Perth and
ation that he does
I be forgiven if the
t my mind—he is
n but he is also a

1781

The Case of

14 MAY 1956

Commander Crabb

1782

What the hon. and gallant Member for Nottingham, Central (Lieut.-Colonel Cordeaux) said spelled out for the right hon. Gentleman that neither the First Lord nor the First Sea Lord should be holding their present offices. Because, without pressing the Government on any point of secrecy, it is undeniable that on the night of 29th April a senior Member of the Board of Admiralty, either political or naval, must have authorised the statement that Commander Crabb had met his death. If, therefore, a Service Department has to disclose to the country and to the world that operations have been undertaken at a delicate stage of international negotiations without the knowledge or consent of either the political or the Service chiefs, then either or both, without waiting for any prompting from Conservative back benchers, should tender their resignations to the Prime Minister.

The central point of this story is not what Commander Crabb was up to or who instructed him, but the communiqué of the night of 29th April, because there the Admiralty, without being pressed and without any Press prompting, volunteered the information that it was responsible for what happened to Commander Crabb.

There is one other very serious matter which I ask the Prime Minister to believe that I feel about as sincerely as he does. I am desperately concerned about the state of the defences of this country. I believe our defences to be deplorably weak in all aspects despite the fact that very large sums of public money have been spent. It is my belief, as I watch the continuous stream of propaganda that is being poured out, that the Admiralty is fighting a rearguard action to justify an annual expenditure of £350 million.

What did Commander Crabb and those who instructed him hope to find out? Surely it was in the hope of trying to justify the Admiralty view that is being put across to the public that the Russian fleet is a menace, which justifies the maintaining of our expensive naval forces. I believe that such an undertaking places the public interest in jeopardy, for decisions as to how defence expenditure is to be made is a matter for calm and deliberate choice. Therefore, from every point of view this opera-

33 D 33

tion and the Government's attitude must be condemned.

Turning to the speech of the right hon. and learned Member for Kensington, South (Sir P. Spens), I must say that I really was shocked. He is a learned and highly respected Member of this House. I am very loath indeed to say this, but the arguments that he used were the kind of arguments that a lickspittle in the Nazi Party would have used if he had wanted to curry favour with Hitler.

9.37 p.m.

Sir James Hutchison (Glasgow, Scots-toun): The main burden of the speech of the right hon. Member for Bassettlaw (Mr. Bellenger) rested on his criticism that the lack of further information from my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister prevented hon. Members from being able to do what the Press is able to do, namely to probe and speculate. I think that criticism has been very completely answered by the speeches which have been delivered from both sides of the Committee, in which speculation has run riot.

I should like to make an appeal. This is a period of restraint and of appeals for restraint, and I think that nothing but good could come if we followed that example after the debate is concluded. I would go further and ask that the whole theme be muted down. We have paid our tributes to a gallant man, and I think that thereafter the whole story should be allowed to lapse into the shadows which are its proper background.

My reasons for asking that are as follows. First, let us be realists. I think that most hon. Members who have spoken tonight have recognised that we are not by any means the only nation with a secret service. All nations have secret services, and the job of these services is to get secret information. Believe me, the Russians are no amateurs in this. Can that be why they are so little worried by the whole incident?

I was greatly puzzled to discover from the speech by my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Nottingham, Central (Lieut.-Colonel Cordeaux) whether he felt that this was a matter of great irritation internationally or that it would count for nothing at all. At the beginning of his speech he said the first thing, and at the end he said the second.

1783

The Case of

14 MAY 1956

Commander Crabb

1784

[Sir J. HUTCHISON.]

It seems to me that the Russian leaders have treated the incident in its proper proportion. It is true that a protest was made and an apology was sent, but they appear to be much more prepared to allow the matter to fade into the background where it belongs than are our Press and the Opposition tonight. The longer this matter goes on the more chance is there of friction being developed—international friction which, I believe, both sides of the House are anxious to dispel.

There is no doubt that the visit of the two Russian leaders did good. In this matter protocol has been followed properly in the relationship and the messages which have passed between the two countries. Is it for this reason that one of the newspapers was able to write that Marshal Bulganin and Mr. Khrushchev were too pleased with the London visit to make an issue out of this curious and unexpected lapse? That is the answer, I think, to the right hon. Gentleman who was so worried, in the speech which we listened to this evening, as to whether in fact international friction had been created.

Mr. Chapman: Did not the Prime Minister end by saying that what he cared for most was that this matter should not disturb international relations and, therefore, on that account, refused to talk about the matter any further?

Sir J. Hutchison: I am saying that that is the proper way to treat it. The more we argue about a thing like this the more we tend to upset international relations.

The other reason why I think that this matter should be treated with restraint and, indeed, with oblivion is that this thirst for unusual and rather obscure knowledge does nothing but harm to the Secret Service itself. Either we have a Secret Service or we do not. If we are going to have one, do not let us go on trying to persuade it to do a sort of strip-tease act and cast aside one veil after another. The methods and organisation of the Secret Service are very important matters, and the more we discuss and probe them, the more we tend to reveal, as would have happened if my right hon. Friend had been led on a little further, and that does nothing but damage to the service. We are making the task of

those who are serving and those engaged on a delicate and sometimes dangerous task all the more difficult. Discussion and limelight can do nothing but harm, and limelight is the very last thing that any one employed in this sort of work could possibly want to have.

What good, then, is this debate going to do? If it was a question of showing up gaucherie—and there has been gaucherie—that has been noted and will be put right. If it was disciplinary action that was wanted that has already been announced, and surely the right hon. Gentleman will accept that if disciplinary action is used it will be used on the person on whom it should fall and not on some one else. [An HON. MEMBER: "Which one?"] There can be no purpose in using disciplinary action in any other way. If, on the other hand, the purpose is to diminish the stature of the Prime Minister, the debate has failed, or if hon. Gentlemen opposite are seeking for another Minister's head on a charger then the debate will equally have failed. There can be no good purpose in deepening this probe any further, and I hope that the matter will be allowed to fade into oblivion.

9.44 p.m.

Mr. R. H. S. Crossman (Coventry, East): I think that the best answer given to the hon. Member for Scotstoun (Sir J. Hutchison) was given by his hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Nottingham, Central (Lieut.-Colonel Cordwax). I think that my right hon. and hon. Friends will agree with me when I say that it is no disparagement of them to say that no speech was more full of intimate, expert knowledge. Here was someone who knew what he was talking about, someone very close to Intelligence who could be spendidly frank, splendidly indiscreet and really tell the Prime Minister what was wrong. We need only to read that speech in HANSARD tomorrow to see the very serious problems which we raised, and they are not to do, as the hon. and gallant Member rightly says, with the Secret Service.

I want to concentrate on the part played by the Admiralty in this affair. My hon. Friend the Member for Dudley (Mr. Wigg) partly raised this point. I want to go on from where he left off. With regard to the communiqué of 19th April, is it really said that the First Lord

1785

of the Admiralty here did not know that they had it, and that which, if one refuses respo

I can appr for an act c cannot unde sibility for is which has b deceit, issued contradiction the Russian a question of of the incom Either they c muniqué was trusted them late hour they of the disa under their i and they wer

I must say this unctious international suspected th interests bei suspect that took over th convenient v being put Admiralty w themselves v Prime Minist defects, is a His was a m thought only

The right dreamed of the First Sea Admiralty, th military Sec Nothing to do Gentleman w of internation thinking abo Secretary. W Anglo-Russian those four p register? No heard why thi No, this is al tional interest.

I support o hon. Gentleman very hard line secret departi goes wrong t

Commander Crabb 1784

ng and those engaged sometimes dangerous difficult. Discussion to nothing but harm, the very last thing that in this sort of work to have.

is this debate going question of showing there has been been noted and will as disciplinary action at has already been truly the right hon. pt that if disciplinary will be used on the should fall and not [An HON. MEMBER: here can be no pur- dinary action in any the other hand, the sh the stature of the debate has failed, or opposite are seeking "s head on a charger equally have failed. good purpose in any further, and I will be allowed to

Crossman (Coventry, the best answer given for Scotstoun (Sir J. n by his hon. and Member for Notting- -Colonel Cordeaux). ght hon. and hon. ith me when I say gement of them to as more full of integ- e. Here was some- e was talking about, to Intelligence who nk, splendidly indis- the Prime Minister e need only to read RD tomorrow to see oblems which we not to do, as the mber rightly says. e.

strate on the part rality in this affair. Member for Dudley ised this point and where he left off. communiqué of 29th that the First Lord

1785

The Case of

14 MAY 1956

Commander Crabb 1786

of the Admiralty or the gentlemen down here did not know about it? Is it said that they had absolutely no knowledge of it, and that it is the sort of thing for which, if one has no knowledge of it, one refuses responsibility?

I can appreciate refusing responsibility for an act of the Secret Service, but I cannot understand shelving the responsibility for issuing a public communiqué which has been proved to be a lie, a deceit, issued by the Admiralty in grave contradiction to what had been stated to the Russian visiting admiral. This is not a question of the Secret Service, but either of the incompetence or lies of Ministers. Either they did not know that the communiqué was being issued and the services trusted them so little that even at that late hour they did not inform the Minister of the disasters going on, ostensibly under their responsibility, or they knew and they were not telling the whole truth.

I must say that the more I heard in this unctious debate about national and international safety, the more I gravely suspected that there were some party interests being defended. I began to suspect that when the Prime Minister took over the matter. It was a very convenient way to prevent questions being put to representatives of the Admiralty who might have defended themselves very much worse than the Prime Minister who, whatever his other defects, is a brilliant Parliamentarian. His was a magnificent performance. He thought only of international interests.

The right hon. Gentleman never dreamed of considering the problem of the First Sea Lord, the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Civil Lord or the Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty. Nothing to do with them. The right hon. Gentleman was thinking solely in terms of international interests. He was not thinking about the unfortunate Home Secretary. What has it got to do with Anglo-Russian interests to discover that those four pages were torn out of the register? Nothing whatever. Have we heard why the police went to the hotel? No, this is all in the realm of international interest. But it is not at all.

I support one other thing said by the hon. Gentleman opposite. I think it is very hard lines on people who work in secret departments. When something goes wrong they are blamed. If this

33 D 35

business had gone right, would there have been all this talk of disciplinary action? Supposing that Commander Crabb had come back safely from the mission, should we then have had the Prime Minister outraged by what he had done? What odious hypocrisy. There would have been medals for success, but when there is a slip-up, and Ministers are in trouble, then we have all the security and all the hocus-pocus about "I cannot tell you." Because somebody who is a politician and also an official is in trouble, the cover-up starts.

I think that the people of this country have a perfect right, when they suspect something as dirty as that, to express their anxieties. Of course, we cannot ultimately know the truth, but is it really the Opposition's fault that this matter has come to light? There has been a deluge of publicity on the Secret Service from the Admiralty. The Admiralty did that and the Prime Minister then contradicted the Admiralty and made matters worse confounded by giving his own peculiar version of his own self-sacrifice. He said that if any Minister had known, if any responsible civil servant had known, they would never have dreamt of allowing this to happen. I wonder.

We have lived for a long period in the cold war. Speeches have been made in this House describing the Russians as the enemy, and saying that there is no possibility of negotiating with them. Speeches were made by the Prime Minister, a short time ago, describing as appeasement what he is now doing. For years we have lived in an atmosphere in which the idea of treating the Russians not as an enemy to be spied on was positively disloyal. I cannot find it surprising that some members of the Secret Service have not caught up with the change of front of the Government, which, suddenly, is all enamoured of negotiation.

I can remember the time when the right hon. Member for Woodford (Sir W. Churchill) first suggested a high-level conference and his Tory colleagues howled him down and tried to sabotage the conference. They succeeded in preventing us having a conference for years. [HON. MEMBERS: "Nonsense."] I suspect that some members of the Secret Service, and possibly some high officials in the Admiralty, are just a bit old-fashioned. They are still living in the

1787

The Case of

14 MAY 1956

Commander Crabb

1788

[MR. CROSSMAN.] cold war and taking seriously the directive of the Tory Government when they came to power. Even some of my colleagues have constantly told me that the Russians must be regarded simply and solely as enemies of civilisation who understand nothing but the language of strength, and with whom it is hopeless to believe that the word "peace" is possible. If that is true, what is wrong with sending frogmen under their cruisers? If it is not true, some hon. Members opposite will have to withdraw thousands of words they have been speaking in the last ten years.

Mr. Cyril Osborne (Louth): Surely the hon. Member will agree that in the last three years there has been a change of Government in Russia and a different policy there.

Mr. Crossman: The hon. Member and I are in surprising agreement on this subject. We probably agree with the right hon. Member for Woodford who tells us that the Russians ought to join in the spirit of N.A.T.O. The hon. Member and I agree at the moment, but other hon. Members opposite will only agree two years later. That is the point I am making. He and I have gone far on this subject, but the Prime Minister was not one of the advance guard, nor were the other right hon. and hon. Members on the Front Bench. They were by no means in the advance guard, and it ill becomes them to rebuke members of the Civil Service who just do not understand the new world of international co-operation in which the Prime Minister so fervently believes.

If the Prime Minister believes that it was outrageous to send that frogman then there are one or two other outrageous things which he might polish up at the same time. We seem to be still scared stiff of the Russians disarming for fear they might be tricking us into something. If it is really a crime

to send a frogman underneath their ships and the Prime Minister has dismissed those who are responsible, I begin to see other changes which might be made in our foreign policy. If they are now our friends, I hope there will be full support for the speech of the right hon. Member for Woodford at Aachen, but I have not heard a word of support from the Prime Minister for that. The Prime Minister says that we must treat the Russians as allies in the noble venture of resisting aggression all round. If that is the Prime Minister's new spirit, I see great beginnings in this debate—but, of course, I do not believe a word of it. I know that this is a cover-up. I know perfectly well that if it had been successful and the whole affair had not leaked out, no disciplinary action would have been taken whatever. I know that this is merely the blundering of a politician in the Admiralty. [HON. MEMBERS: "And the First Lord."] We will not mention the First Lord.

That is the whole problem; that is why we have all these solicitudes for international relations in order to cover up one of the biggest bungles ever committed by a Service Department.

Mr. Gaitskell: To mark our disapproval of what the hon. and gallant Member for Nottingham, Central (Lieut.-Colonel Cordeaux) so well described as "this ill-conceived and unhappy operation," and in protest against the Prime Minister's complete refusal to answer any of our questions, many of which, in our opinion at least, could well have been answered without endangering public security at all, we shall be obliged to divide the Committee.

I beg to move, That Class 1, Vote 4, Treasury and Subordinate Departments, and Navy Estimates, Vote 12, Admiralty Office, be reduced by £5.

Question put, That a sum not exceeding £15 be granted for the said Service.

The Committee divided: Ayes 229, Noes 316.

Division No. 181.]

Ainsley, J. W.

Albu, A. H.

Allaun, Frank (Salford, E.)

Allen, Arthur (Bosworth)

Allen, Scholefield (Crewe)

Anderson, Frank

Awbery, S. S.

Bacon, Miss Alice

Baird, J.

AYES

[D. 56 p.m.]

Balfour, A.

Bellenger, Rt. Hon. F. J.

Benza, G. R. (Dunbartonshire, E.)

Benn, Hn. Wedgwood (Bristol, S.E.)

Benson, C.

Bewick, F.

Bevan, Rt. Hon. A. (Ebbw Vale)

Blackburn, P.

Blenkinsop, A.

Boardman, H.

Bottomley, Rt. Hon. A. C.

Bowden, H. W. (Leicester, S.W.)

Bowles, F. G.

Boyd, T. C.

Braddock, Mrs. Elizabeth

Brookway, A. F.

Broughton, Dr. A. D. D.

Brown, Rt. Hon. George (Belper)

Browne, Cmdr. P. G.

Bullen, W. T.

Burn, R. J. (Buddle)

Clyatt, C. J. M.

Emery, Julian (Pres

Emory, Rt. Hon. Hea

Anstruther-Gray, Ma

Arbuthnot, John

Armstrong, C. W.

Ashton, H.

Astor, Hon. J. J.

Atkins, H. E.

Baldock, Lt.-Cmdr.

33 D 36

33 D 37

mander Crabb 1788

underneath their ships
Minister has dismissed
possible; I begin to see
that might be made in
If they are now our
we will be full support
the right hon. Member
achen, but I have not
sport from the Prince
The Prime Minister
treat the Russians as
venture of resisting

If that is the Prime
I see great begin-
but, of course, I do
it. I know that this
w perfectly well that
ssful and the whole
out, no disciplinary
en taken whatever,
erely the blundering
Admiralty. [HON.
First Lord].] We
First Lord.

problem ; that is why
elicitudes for inter-
order to cover up
gles ever committed
ent.

ark our disapproval
gallant Member for
I (Lieut.-Colonel
cribed as "this ill-
by operation," and
e Prime Minister's
nswer any of our
ach, in our opinion
ve been answered
blic security at all,
i to divide the

Class 1, Vote 4.
ate Departments,
ote 12, Admiralty
5.

sum not exceeding
said Service :—
ided: Ayes 229,

[9.56 p.m.]

Hon. A. G.
(Leicester, S.W.)

Elizabeth
A. D. D.
George (Belper)

Approved For Release 2003/02/27 : CIA-RDP80B01676R000900070003-5

1789 The Case of

Brown, Thomas (Ince).
Burke, W. A.
Butler, Herbert (Hackney, C.)
Butler, Mrs. Joyce (Wood Green)
Callaghan, L. J.
Castle, Mrs. B. A.
Champion, A. J.
Chapman, W. D.
Chetwynd, G. R.
Cline, J.
Goldrick, W.
Gellish, P. H. (Birkenhead)
Collins, V. J. (Shoreditch & Finsbury)
Corlett, Mrs. Freda
Cove, W. G.
Craddock, George (Bradford, S.)
Cronin, J. D.
Crossman, R. H. S.
Dalton, P.
Dalton, Rt. Hon. H.
Darling, George (Hillsborough)
Davies, Ernest (Enfield, E.)
Davies, Harold (Leek)
Davies, Stephen (Merthyr)
Deer, G.
de Freitas, Geoffrey
Delaney, H. J.
Dodd, N. N.
Donnelly, D. L.
Dugdale, Rt. Hon. John (W. Bromwich)
Eds, Rt. Hon. J. C.
Edelman, M.
Edwards, Rt. Hon. John (Brighouse)
Edwards, Rt. Hon. Ness (Caerphilly)
Edwards, Robert (Bliston)
Evans, Albert (Islington, S.W.)
Evans, Edward (Lowestoft)
Evans, Stanley (Wednesbury)
Ferryhough, E.
Finch, H. J.
Fletcher, Eric
Fraser, Thomas (Hamilton)
Galscott, Rt. Hon. H. T. N.
Gibson, C. W.
Gordon Walker, Rt. Hon. P. C.
Greenwood, Anthony
Grenfell, Rt. Hon. D. R.
Grey, C. F.
Griffiths, David (Rother Valley)
Griffiths, Rt. Hon. James (Llanelli)
Griffiths, William (Exchange)
Hale, Leslie
Hall, Rt. Hon. Glenville (Colne Valley)
Hamilton, W. W.
Hannan, W.
Hastings, S.
Hayman, F. H.
Healey, Denis
Henderson, Rt. Hon. A. (Rwiy Regis)
Herbison, Miss M.
Hobson, C. R.
Houghton, Douglas
Howell, Charles (Perry Barr)
Howell, Denis (All Saints)
Hughes, Emrys (S. Ayrshire)
Hughes, Hector (Aberdeen, N.)
Hunter, A. E.
Hynd, H. (Aorlinton)

14 MAY 1956

Irving, S. (Dartford)
Isaac, Rt. Hon. G. A.
Janner, B.
Jay, Rt. Hon. D. P. T.
Jeger, George (Coote)
Jeger, Mrs. Lena (Holm & St. Pines, S.)
Jenkins, Roy (Stephord)
Johnson, James (Rugby)
Jones, Rt. Hon. A. Grech (Wakefield)
Jones, David (The Hartlepools)
Jones, Elwyn (W. Hain, S.)
Jones, Jack (Rotherham)
Jones, J. Idwal (Wrexham)
Kenyon, C.
Key, Rt. Hon. C. W.
Lawson, G. M.
Ledger, R. J.
Lee, Frederick (Newton)
Lee, Miss Jennie (Canrook)
Lever, Harold (Cheetham)
Laver, Leslie (Ardwick)
Lewis, Arthur
Lindgren, G. S.
Lipton, Lt.-Col. M.
Logan, D. G.
Mahon, Dr. J. Dickson
MacColl, J. E.
McInnes, J.
McKay, John (WallSEND)
McLeavy, Frank
MacPherson, Malcolm (Birling)
Mahon, Simon
Maitland, E. L. (Brigg)
Marquand, Rt. Hon. H. A.
Mason, Roy
Mayhew, C. P.
Mellish, R. J.
Messer, Sir F.
Mikardo, Ian
Mitchison, G. R.
Monslow, W.
Moody, A. S.
Mort, D. L.
Moss, R.
Moyle, A.
Mulley, F. W.
Neat, Harold (Bolsover)
Noel-Baker, Francis (Swindon)
Oliver, G. H.
Oram, A. E.
Orbach, M.
Oswald, T.
Owen, W. J.
Paget, R. T.
Paling, Rt. Hon. W. (Dearne Valley)
Paling, Will T. (Dewsbury)
Palmer, A. M. F.
Pargeter, G. A.
Parker, J.
Parkin, B. T.
Paton, J.
Plummer, Sir Leslie
Popplewell, E.
Price, J. T. (Westhoughton)
Price, Phillips (Gloucestershire, W.)
Probert, A. R.
Proctor, W. T.

NOES

Arnew, Cmdr. P. G.
Aitken, W. T.
Allan, R. A. (Paddington, S.)
Alport, C. J. M.
Amery, Julian (Preston, N.)
Anstruther-Grey, Major W. J.
Arbuthnott, John
Armstrong, C. W.
Ashton, H.
Astor, Hon. J. J.
Atkins, H. E.
Baldock, Lt.-Cmdr. S. M.

Baldwin, A. E.
Bainbridge, Lord
Banks, Col. C.
Barber, Anthony
Barlow, Sir John
Bartter, John
Baxter, Sir Beverley
Bell, Philip (Bolton, E.)
Bell, Ronald (Bucks, S.)
Bennett, F. M. (Torquay)
Bennett, Dr. Reginald
Bevins, J. R. (Toxteth)
Bidgood, J. C.

Biggs-Davison, J. A.
Birch, Rt. Hon. Nigel
Bishop, F. P.
Black, C. W.
Body, R. F.
Boothby, Sir Robert
Bossom, Sir A. C.
Boyd-Carpenter, Rt. Hon. J. A.
Boyle, Sir Edward
Braine, B. R.
Braithwaite, Sir Albert (Harrow, W.)
Bromley-Davenport, Lt.-Col. W. H.
Brooke, Rt. Hon. Henry

Commander Crabb

1790

Pryde, D. J.
Pursey, Cmdr. H.
Rankin, John
Redhead, E. C.
Reeves, J.
Reid, William
Robens, Rt. Hon. A.
Roberts, Albert (Normanton)
Roberts, Coronwy (Caernarvon)
Robinson, Kenneth (S. Paisley, N.)
Rogers, George (Kensington, N.)
Ross, William
Shawcross, Rt. Hon. Sir Hartley
Short, E. W.
Shurmer, P. L. E.
Silverman, Julius (Aston)
Silverman, Sydney (Nelson)
Skeffington, A. M.
Slater, Mrs. H. (Stoke, N.)
Slater, J. (Sedgefield)
Smith, Ellis (Stoke, S.)
Snow, J. W.
Sorensen, R. W.
Sparks, J. A.
Steele, T.
Stewart, Michael (Fulham)
Stokes, Rt. Hon. R. R. (Ipswich)
Stones, W. (Consett)
Strachey, Rt. Hon. J.
Strauss, Dr. Barnett (Stoke-on-Trent, C.)
Summerskill, Rt. Hon. E.
Swinger, S. T.
Sylvester, G. O.
Taylor, Bernard (Mansfield)
Taylor, John (West Lothian)
Thomas, Ivor (Rhondda, W.)
Thomson, George (Dundee, E.)
Timmons, J.
Tomney, F.
Turner-Samuels, M.
Urquhart-Thomas, Sir Lynn
Viant, S. P.
Warkey, W. N.
Watkins, T. E.
Weitzman, D.
Wells, Percy (Faversham)
Wells, William (Walsall, N.)
West, D. G.
Wheelton, W. E.
White, Mrs. Irene (E. Flint)
White, Henry (Derbyshire, N.E.)
Wiggs, George
Wilcock, Group Capt. C. A. B.
Wilkins, W. A.
Wiley, Frederick
Williams, David (Neath)
Williams, Rev. Llywelyn (Ab'dillery)
Willis, Eustace (Edinburgh, E.)
Wilson, Rt. Hon. Harold (Huyton)
Winterbottom, Richard
Woodburn, Rt. Hon. A.
Woof, R. E.
Yates, V. (Ladywood)
Younger, Rt. Hon. K.
Ziliacus, K.

TELLERS FOR THE AYES :

Mr. Simmons and Mr. Holmes.

1791 *The Case of*

Brooman-White, R. C.
 Browne, J. Nixon (Craigton)
 Bryan, P.
 Bughan-Hepburn, Rt. Hon. P. G. T.
 Bullus, Wing Commander E. E.
 Burden, F. F. A.
 Butcher, Sir Herbert
 Butler, Rt. Hon. R.A. (Saffron Walden)
 Campbell, Sir David
 Carr, Robert
 Cary, Sir Robert
 Channon, H.
 Chichester-Clark, R.
 Churchill, Rt. Hon. Sir Winston
 Clarke, Brig. Terence (Portsmouth, W.)
 Cole, Norman
 Conant, Maj. Sir Roger
 Cooper, Surgt. Ldr. Albert
 Cordeaux, Lt.-Col. J. K.
 Corfield, Capt. F. V.
 Craddock, Beresford (Spelthorne)
 Crouch, R. F.
 Crowder, Peter (Ruislip—Northwood)
 Cunningham, Knox
 Currie, G. B. H.
 Dance, J. C. G.
 Davies, Rt. Hon. Clement (Montgomery)
 D'Avigdor-Goldsmid, Sir Henry
 Deedes, W. F.
 Digby, Simon Wingfield
 Dodds-Parker, A. D.
 Donaldson, Cmdr. C. E. McA.
 Doughty, C. J. A.
 Drayson, G. B.
 du Cann, E. D. L.
 Dugdale, Rt. Hon. Sir T. (Richmond)
 Duncan, Capt. J. A. L.
 Duttie, W. S.
 Eccles, Rt. Hon. Sir David
 Eden, Rt. Hon. Sir (Warwick & L. M'tn)
 Eden, J. B. (Bournemouth, West)
 Emmet, Hon. Mrs. Evelyn
 Erroll, F. J.
 Farey-Jones, F. W.
 Fall, A.
 Finlay, Craeme
 Fisher, Nigel
 Fleetwood-Hesketh, R. F.
 Fletcher-Cooke, C.
 Fort, R.
 Foster, John
 Fraser, Hon. Hugh (Stone)
 Fraser, Sir Ian (M'combe & Lonsdale)
 Freeth, D. K.
 Gammans, Sir David
 Garner-Evans, E. H.
 George, J. C. (Pollok)
 Gibson-Watt, D.
 G'over, D.
 Godber, J. B.
 Cough, C. F. H.
 Gower, H. R.
 Graham, Sir Fergus
 Grant, W. (Woodside)
 Grant-Farrar, Wg.Cdr. R. (Nantwich)
 Green, A.
 Grosvenor Cooke, R.
 Grimston, Hon. John (St. Albans)
 Grimston, Sir Robert (Westbury)
 Grosvenor, Lt.-Col. R. G.
 Gurden, Harold
 Hall, John (Wycombe)
 Hare, Rt. Hon. J. H.
 Harris, Frederic (Croydon, N.W.)
 Harris, Reader (Boston)
 Harrison, A. B. C. (Maldon)
 Harrington, Col. J. H. (Eyre)
 Harvey, Air Vice-A. V. (Mazeppa)
 Harvey, Ian (Harrow, E.)
 Harvey, John (Walthamstow, E.)
 Harvie-Watt, Sir George
 Hay, John
 Head, Rt. Hon. A. H.
 Head, Rt. Hon. Sir Lionel
 Henderson, John (Cathcart)
 Hicks-Beach, Maj. W. W.

14 MAY 1956

Hill, Mrs. E. (Wythenshaw)
 Hill, John (St. Norfolk)
 Hinchingbrooke, Viscount
 Holland-Martin, C. J.
 Hope, Lord John
 Hornby-Smith, Miss M. P.
 Horobin, Sir Ian
 Horobin, Rt. Hon. Dame Florence
 Howard, Gerald (Cambridgeshire)
 Howard, Hon. Craville (St. Ives)
 Howard, John (Test)
 Hudson, Sir Austin (Lewisham, N.)
 Hudson, W. R. A. (Hull, N.)
 Hughes Hallett, Vice-Admiral J.
 Hughes-Young, M. H. C.
 Hulbert, Sir Norman
 Hurd, A. R.
 Hutchison, Sir Ian Clark (E' b'gh, W.)
 Hutchison, Sir James (Scotstoun)
 Hyde, Montgomery
 Hyton-Foster, Sir H. B. H.
 Iremonger, T. L.
 Irvine, Bryant Codman (Rye)
 Jenkins, Robert (Dulwich)
 Jennings, J. C. (Burton)
 Jennings, Sir Roland (Hallam)
 Johnson, Dr. Donald (Carlisle)
 Johnson, Eric (Blackley)
 Johnson, Howard (Kemptown)
 Jones, Rt. Hon. Aubrey (Hall Green)
 Joseph, Sir Keith
 Joynton-Hicks, Hon. Sir Lancelot
 Kaberry, D.
 Keegan, D.
 Kerby, Capt. H. B.
 Kerr, H. W.
 Kershaw, J. A.
 Kimball, M.
 Kirk, P. M.
 Lagden, G. W.
 Lambert, Hon. G.
 Lambton, Viscount
 Lancaster, Col. C. G.
 Langford-Holt, J. A.
 Leather, E. H. C.
 Leavy, J. A.
 Legge-Bourke, Maj. E. A. H.
 Leigh, Hon. Peter (Peterfield)
 Lennox-Boyd, Rt. Hon. A. T.
 Lindsay, Hon. James (Devon, N.)
 Lindsay, Martin (Solihull)
 Linstead, Sir H. N.
 Llewellyn, D. T.
 Lloyd, Rt. Hon. G. (Sutton Coldfield)
 Lloyd, Maj. Sir Guy (Renfrew, E.)
 Lloyd-George, Maj. Rt. Hon. G.
 Longden, Gilbert
 Low, Rt. Hon. A. R. W.
 Lucas, Sir Jocelyn (Portsmouth, S.)
 Lucas, P. B. (Brentford & Chiswick)
 Lucas-Tooth, Sir Hugh
 MacAdden, S. J.
 Macdonald, Sir Peter
 Mackeson, Brig. Sir Harry
 Mackie, J. H. (Galloway)
 McLaughlin, Mrs. P.
 MacLay, Rt. Hon. John
 Maclean, Fitzroy (Lancaster)
 Macleod, Rt. Hon. Ian (Enfield, W.)
 MacLeod, John (Ross & Cromarty)
 Macmillan, Rt. Hon. Harold (Bromley)
 Macpherson, Niall (Dumfries)
 Maddan, Marlin
 Maitland, Capt. J. F. W. (Hornastle)
 Maitland, Hon. Patriot (Lanark)
 Manningham-Buller, Rt. Hon. Sir D.
 Markham, Major Sir Frank
 Marlowe, A. A. H.
 Marples, A. E.
 Marshall, Douglas
 Mathew, R.
 Maude, Angus
 Maudling, Rt. Hon. R.
 Mayday, R. L.
 Maydon, Lt.-Comdr. S. L. G.
 Medlicott, Sir Frank

Commander Crabb 1792

Milligan, Rt. Hon. W. R. . . .
 Molton, A. H. E.
 Moors, Sir Thomas
 Morrison, John (Salisbury)
 Mott-Radcliffe, C. E.
 Nabarro, G. D. N.
 Nairn, D. L. S.
 Neave, Airey
 Nicholls, Harman
 Nicholson, Godfrey (Farnham)
 Nicolson, N. (B'nm'tn, E. & Chr'oh)
 Nield, Basil (Chester)
 Noble, Comdr. A. H. P.
 Nutting, Rt. Hon. Anthony
 Oakshott, H. D.
 O'Neill, Hn. Phelim (Co. Antrim, N.)
 Ormsby-Gore, Hon. W. D.
 Orr, Capt. L. P. S.
 Orr-Ewing, Charles Ian (Hengon, N.)
 Orr-Ewing, Sir Ian (Weston-E Mare)
 Osborne, C.
 Page, R. C.
 Pannell, N. A. (Kirkdale)
 Partridge, E.
 Peyton, J. W. W.
 Pickthorn, K. W. M.
 Plunkett, Capt. R. A.
 Pliman, I. J.
 Pitt, Miss E. M.
 Pott, H. P.
 Powell, J. Enoch
 Price, Henry (Lewisham, W.)
 Prior-Palmer, Brig. O. L.
 Profumo, J. D.
 Rakke, Sir Victor
 Ramsden, J. E.
 Rawlinson, Peter
 Redmayne, M.
 Rees-Davies, W. R.
 Remnant, Hon. P.
 Renton, D. L. M.
 Ridgdale, J. E.
 Rippion, A. G. F.
 Roberts, Sir Peter (Hesley)
 Robertson, Sir David
 Rodgers, John (Sevenoaks)
 Roger, Sir Harold
 Roper, Col. Sir Leonard
 Russell, R. S.
 Sandys, Rt. Hon. D.
 Schofield, Lt.-Col. W.
 Scott-Miller, Gmdr. R.
 Sharples, R. C.
 Shepherd, William
 Simon, J. E. S. (Middleborough, W.)
 Smithers, Peter (Wincheste.)
 Smyth, Brig. Sir John (N'wood)
 Soames, Capt. C.
 Spearman, A. C. M.
 Speler, R. M.
 Spens, H. R. (Aberdeen, W.)
 Spens, Rt. Hon. Sir P. (Kirk'gtn, S.)
 Stanley, Capt. Hon. Richard
 Stevens, Geoffrey
 Steward, Harold (Stockport, S.)
 Steward, Sir William (W'ich'w, W.)
 Stewart, Henderson (Fife, E.)
 Stoddart-Scott, Col. M.
 Stuart, Rt. Hon. James (Moray)
 Studholme, M. C.
 Summers, G. S. (Aylesbury)
 Sumner, W. D. M. (Orgionton)
 Taylor, Sir Charles (Eastbourne)
 Taylor, William (Bradforl, N.)
 Teeling, W.
 Thomas, Leslie (Canterbury)
 Thompson, Kenneth (W'iton)
 Thompson, Lt.-Col. R. (Aydon, S.)
 Thurlow-Campbell, Sir Hon. T.
 Thornton-Kemsley, C. J.
 Tiley, A. (Bradford, W.)
 Tilney, John (Waverly)
 Turner, H. F. L.
 Turton, Rt. Hon. R. H.
 Tweedsmuir, Lady
 Vane, W. M. F.

1793 *Pens*

Vaughan-Morgan
 Vickers, Miss J.
 Vosper, D. F.
 Wakefield, Edwa
 Walker-Smith, D
 Wall, Major Pal
 Ward, Hon. Geo

Original

*It being a
being taken
CHAIRMAN i
gress and a*

*Committe
again Tomc*

PENSIC

Lords A

Clause J

SPECIF

Lords A
 14, leave o

Mr. D
 MacAndrev
 privileged,
 Entry be n

10.8 p.m.

The F
 Treasury (

move, Thu

the Lords

This anc
 36, to leav
 line 37, w/
 with a sma
 received a
 It concern
 child, whi
 with pensi
 and wome
 under 60.
 House, a c
 to be rece
 struction :
 these conc
 fied at all
 the age o

There n
 school at
 16 to 18 :
 years' trai
 In the fo
 House, th
 establish
 during th
 between 1

Commander Grabb 1792
 Igan, Rt. Hon. W. R.
 son, A. H. E.
 re, Sir Thomas
 rison, John (Salisbury)
 Radcliffe, G. E.
 arro, G. D. N.
 n, D. L. S.
 ve, Alroy
 olls, Harmer
 olson, Godfrey (Farnham)
 ell, Mr. (H. B. M.) E. & Shire
 ll, Basil (Chester)
 lo, Comdr. A. H. P.
 ting, Rt. Hon. Anthony
 hott, H. D.
 ill, Hon. Phelim (Co. Antrim, N.)
 shy-Gore, Hon. W. D.
 Capt. L. P. S.
 -Ewing, Charles Ian (Hendon, N.)
 orne, C.
 e, R. G.
 well, N. A. (Kirkdale)
 ridge, E.
 on, J. W. W.
 thorn, K. W. M.
 ington, Capt. R. A.
 an, J. J.
 Miss E. M.
 H. P.
 ell, J. Enoch
 -o, Henry (Lewisham, W.)
 Palmer, Brig. Q. L.
 umo, J. D.
 os, Sir Victor
 iden, J. E.
 nson, Peter
 mayno, M.
 Davies, W. R.
 ant, Hon. P.
 on, D. L. M.
 adale, J. E.
 on, A. C. F.
 orts, Sir Peter (Heeley)
 erson, Sir David
 gers, John (Severnoka)
 or, Sir Harold
 er, Col. Sir Leonard
 ell, R. S.
 lds, Rt. Hon. D.
 field, Lt.-Col. W.
 Miller, Cmdr. R.
 ples, R. G.
 pherd, William
 on, J. E. S. (Middlesbrough, W.)
 others, Peter (Winchester)
 th, Brig. Sir John (Norwood)
 mes, Capt. C.
 arman, A. C. M.
 r, R. M.
 co, H. R. (Aberdeen, W.)
 ns, Rt. Hon. Sir P. (Kings't'n, S.)
 ley, Capt. Hon. Richard
 ens, Geoffrey
 ward, Harold (Stockport, S.)
 ward, Sir William (Woolwich, W.)
 wart, Henderson (Fife, E.)
 Dart-Scott, Col. M.
 art, Rt. Hon. James (Moray)
 holme, H. C.
 amers, C. S. (Aylesbury)
 er, W. D. M. (Orpington)
 lor, Sir Charles (Eastbourne)
 lor, William (Bradford, N.)
 ling, W.
 mas, Leslie (Canterbury)
 mpson, Kenneth (Walton)
 mpson, Lt.-Cdr. R. (Croydon, S.)
 rneycroft, Rt. Hon. P.
 rnton-Kensley, C. N.
 y, A. (Bradford, W.)
 ey, John (Wavertree)
 mer, H. F. L.
 son, Rt. Hon. R. H.
 sedamuir, Lady
 e, W. M. F.

1793 Pensions (Increase) Bill

14 MAY 1956

Vaughan-Morgan, J. K.
 Vickers, Miss J. H.
 Vosper, D. F.
 Wakefield, Edward (Derbyshire, W.)
 Walker-Smith, D. C.
 Wall, Major Patrik
 Ward, Hon. George (Worcester)

Ward, Dame Irene (Tynemouth)
 Waterhouse, Capt. Rt. Hon. G.
 Watkinson, Rt. Hon. Harold
 Webb, Sir H.
 Whitelaw, W. S. I. (Penrith & Border)
 Williams, Paul (Sunderland, S.)
 Williams, R. Dudley (Exeter)

Lords Amendments 1794

Wills, G. (Bridgwater)
 Wilson, Geoffrey (Truro)
 Wood, Hon. R.
 Woollam, John Victor
 Yates, William (The Wrekin)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES:
 Mr. Heath and Mr. Galbraith.

Original Question again proposed.

It being after Ten o'clock and objection being taken to further Proceedings, The CHAIRMAN left the Chair to report Progress and ask leave to sit again.

Committee report Progress; to sit again Tomorrow.

PENSIONS (INCREASE) BILL

Lords Amendments considered.

Clause 1.—(INCREASE OF PENSIONS SPECIFIED IN FIRST SCHEDULE)

Lords Amendments: In page 2, line 14, leave out from "is" to end of line 16.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker (Sir Charles MacAndrew): All these Amendments are privileged, and I direct that a Special Entry be made in the Journals.

10.8 p.m.

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry Brooke): I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said Amendment.

This and the next Amendment, in line 36, to leave out from "if" to "the" in line 37, which is consequential on it, deal with a small point which I hope will be received as an improvement to the Bill. It concerns the definition of a dependent child, which is important in connection with pension rights of widows under 40 and women pensioners in their own right under 60. Under the Bill as it left this House, a dependent child, if over 16, had to be receiving full-time education or instruction for a trade, and, in addition, these conditions had to have been satisfied at all times since the child reached the age of 16.

There might be a case where a boy left school at 16, let us say, and worked from 16 to 18 and then had a period of three years' training from the age of 18 to 21. In the form in which the Bill left this House, the mother would not be able to establish a claim to a pension increase during that period when her son was between 18 and 21. It would seem to be

very bad luck if that were to happen, and that is why I suggest that this Lords Amendment is an improvement in the Bill.

The Amendment removes the condition that the full-time education or training must have subsisted at all times since the child became 16. The cost of accepting this Amendment will be negligible. There will be very few cases, but I think it will remove a tiny imperfection in the Bill if the Amendment is agreed to.

Mr. Glenvil Hall (Colne Valley): I need add very little to what the right hon. Gentleman the Financial Secretary has said. He was good enough to give me advance notice of these particular Amendments and their effects. I must say that I and my hon. Friends have looked at these Amendments and we heartily agree with the changes which have been made in another place. We accept them without question.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 8.—(POWERS TO INCREASE OTHER PENSIONS)

Lords Amendment: In page 8, line 39, after "areas" to insert "in respect of certain service".

Mr. H. Brooke: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said Amendment.

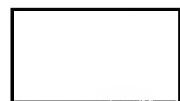
This, and the next two Amendments, raise a different point, but one on which I trust the House will be all the more willing to waive Privilege when I mention that it was brought to the attention before the Bill left this House. My hon. Friend the Member for Yeovil (Mr. Peyton), in a speech on Third Reading, drew attention to the possibility that certain Indian pensioners might be excluded from the operation of the Bill rather unfairly. Clearly, at that stage, it was not possible to do anything about it here, but I gave an undertaking that the Government would examine the position. It was as a result of that that the Amendments were agreed to in another place.

The point at issue is this. Previously, under the Bill as it left this House, if

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Dulles

You asked for this in connection with a
conversation you had with Livie Merchant.

STAT



FMC

6 June 1960

(DATE)

FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101
1 AUG 54 WHICH MAY BE USED.

(47)